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MAGAZINE

Reform promised by Christmas

Leadership snub angers local Tories

By Philip Webster and Andrew Pierce

GRASSROOTS Conservatives rounded on the party at Westminster last night after the 164 Tory MPs decided that they alone would choose a successor to John Major.

The contest will begin on June 10 under the existing rules after the backbench 1922 Committee rejected activists' demands — backed by the party chairman Brian Maughan — that they should have a say.

Members did, however, win a promise of root-and-branch reform after next month's contest, which will now almost certainly be the last conducted solely by MPs.

Even so, the National Union, the party's voluntary arm, will press ahead with plans to give its association chairmen a vote and will publish the results the night before the first ballot.

Robin Hodgson, the National Union chairman, who has been pressing for activist involvement, was diplomatic in his public comments in spite of his disappointment. But others were angry and spoke of a party in ferment.

Welcoming the promise of change in the future, Mr Hodgson said: "It is a breakthrough. An agreement will be reached by Christmas. The new system will be in place for the next leadership contest. But clearly I am very sad and disappointed that not enough MPs could be persuaded to make a change in time for the next election."

But Baroness Miller of Hendon, a leading member of the National Union executive,

feared that there would be a further fall in party membership. "Ordinary members will be up in arms tonight. They are the ones who worked hard, in all weathers, to try to secure the re-election of a Tory government," she said.

"They blame the MPs for losing us the election because they were so disloyal. Yet these are the ones who have decided they are the only ones who are capable of choosing their leader. I have not known the party membership in such a ferment since MPs decided to get rid of Margaret Thatcher. There was a groundswell in favour of change before the election. Since we have been robbed of representation in Wales, Scotland and most major cities, the groundswell has grown into a clamour for change. I am very sad and very disappointed."

Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare, a former deputy chairman of the party and leading advocate of reform, said: "The real decision will be made not by the 1922 but by the next leader of the party. If the new leader decides to do nothing about involving the grassroots, there will be a riot at the party conference. It will be awful. It will not exactly send the clearest signal to the country that we intend to build a democratic mass membership party if the new leader is chosen by 164 MPs."

Yesterday's decision was a setback for William Hague, the former Welsh Secretary, who is widely believed to be the favourite among local members. But his campaign team was undaunted, and

called on other candidates to match Mr Hague's pledge to submit himself to an immediate conference of members for endorsement if elected.

John Redwood, another of the six candidates, said: "It is a perfect resolution. The new leader will be chosen under a system which has the unanimous backing of the 1922 Committee and the full support of the voluntary wing of the party."

The 18-strong 1922 executive agreed yesterday morning that there should be no change in the present method of electing the leader and Sir Archibald saw Mr Hodgson at lunchtime. Mr Hodgson apparently reluctantly accepted that the MPs would not be moved and was reported to have backed the deal. Later a full meeting of the party's MPs decided in less than 10 minutes to hold the contest on the present rules.

The six candidates will therefore face their first ballot on June 10. If no candidate achieves an overall majority, there will be a second ballot a week later. If there is still no outright majority, the two top candidates will hold a run-off two days later on June 19. Sir Archibald will then present options for the new election rules to the 1922 Committee before the summer recess. These will be considered by the party conference in the autumn and the committee is expected to vote on the plans by the end of the year.

Redwood attack, page 10
Matthew Parris, page 20



Pavlos Georgiou arrives at Larnaca yesterday where he swaggered into court, joked with photographers and seemed to enjoy his celebrity status



Janette Pink escorted by her mother

Cypriot forced to attend Aids trial

FROM DANIEL MCGRODY IN LARNACA

DETECTIVES were ordered by a Cypriot judge to arrest a fisherman accused of infecting his British lover with Aids after he admitted himself into a clinic hours before his trial was due to begin yesterday.

Janette Pink looked distraught and confused as her unprecedented legal challenge began in a Larnaca court without the man she accuses of sentencing her to death. For six hours she waited in the stifling court precincts, unsure whether Pavlos Georgiou, 40, would be brought from the Aids ward at the city's general hospital a mile away.

Mr Georgiou's doctor had explained that the father of four, who has HIV and whose wife had died of

the disease, was suddenly fearful yesterday that he was developing dangerous symptoms of the virus.

She shook her head in disgust when the court was told how Mr Georgiou complained that he had a fever only two hours before the case was due to start. The judge looked equally incredulous when Dr Yiannis Demetriades conceded that his patient's temperature had been found to be normal. The judge immediately sent police to the hospital.

Maria Malachidou, the state prosecutor, underlined the urgency of hearing Mrs Pink's testimony. "She has great health problems which makes her appearance in court in the future very doubtful," the prosecutor said.

When he eventually arrived in the

afternoon, Mr Georgiou, a muscular and heavily built man, appeared a picture of health as he climbed from the police car, gave a thumbs up to cameramen and swaggered into the crowded court, apparently enjoying his celebrity status.

If convicted, he faces up to two years in prison or a £1,800 fine. Mr Georgiou denies the charge.

Mrs Pink, 45, was already in court with her parents, Victor and Sylvia Rushon, when Mr Georgiou arrived. When the moment came after her ten-month campaign to confront the man she says knowingly infected her, she could not look him in the eye. Instead she stared ahead while her father threw a protective arm around her.

Victim's story, page 5

Cambridge top again

Cambridge tops *The Times* ranking of universities for the fifth successive year, extending its narrow lead over Oxford. St Andrews emerges as Scotland's finest.

The league table, which compares the 96 universities on eight measures, was altered to give extra weight to official assessments of teaching and research. Pages 38, 39
Leading article, page 21

Leggings ban

Miniskirts and leggings have been banned by the new regime in the Democratic Republic of Congo. A radio station said that clothes which display the female figure should not be worn and that women should dress themselves with "decency". Page 16

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Methodists act over sex abuse by church officials

By Ruth Gledhill, Religion Correspondent

MEN in the Methodist church, including ministers and lay workers, are sexually abusing women with whom they come into contact, according to a Methodist Church report published today.

In an unprecedented acknowledgment of the gravity of the situation, the Methodist Conference will observe a minute's silence "as a mark of sorrow" when it meets in London next month.

A tiny fraction of the church's 3,600 ministers and 10,000 preachers are involved and only a minority of the country's 1.2 million Methodists have experienced abuse or been abusers. But the situation is considered sufficiently serious for the church to be planning a review of disciplinary procedures. A task force to monitor the progress of vic-

tims of sexual abuse may be set up.

The report was written by a working party after all district chairmen were asked in 1996 about disciplinary matters over the previous 15 years.

Of 65 cases of sexual harassment, 55 involved men against women or girls, five were men against men, three involved women against men and two involved women against other women.

But the report says: "Of the total of 65 cases involving complaints of harassment, perhaps the most worrying feature is the significant number in which the resignation of the minister effectively prevented disciplinary action."

The church uses a disciplinary court system where a panel of six hears cases in private. Many ministers avoid

these by resigning as soon as a complaint is made. And many victims find the strain of making the complaint difficult to bear.

The report says the church is often seen as a haven for people experiencing difficulty and who are seeking to have their innermost needs met. "Nonetheless it is in the act of seeking help and support at times of trouble that some of the women we have heard from have made themselves more vulnerable to the potential for harassment."

The Methodist church last night emphasised that it does not consider the problem to be any worse in the church than in other organisations but it wants to set a lead by confronting it head on.

Methodist action, page 4

'Mail' proprietor switches to Labour

By James Landale and Carol Midgely

VISCOUNT Rothermere, proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, which supports the Tories, has joined the Labour benches in the House of Lords.

The chairman of the *Daily Mail* and General Trust, part of the company of the Associated Newspapers group, sat on the government benches on Wednesday afternoon during the final day's debate on the Queen's Speech.

Last night Lord Rothermere said: "Paul Dacre [editor of the *Daily Mail*] is a great editor and I have a very good relationship with him, but we do not always share exactly the same views on politics."

Lord Rothermere, 71, is listed in *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*, the bible of the Palace of Westminster, as sitting as a Conservative since he inherited his title from his father in 1978. His grandfather

and father, the first and second viscounts, sat on the Liberal benches.

However, the present holder of the title does not appear on the Opposition whips' list of Conservative peers and there was confusion last night as to his formal political allegiance in the Lords. The House's information office said that Lord Rothermere had not attended the Lords for at least the past two parliamentary sessions, effectively since 1995. According to Lords' records, Lord Rothermere had not sworn the oath of allegiance for the past two sessions and therefore was unable to take his seat.

A spokesman for the peer said: "If he had attended, he would probably have sat on the crossbenches." However, Lord Rothermere swore the oath on Wednesday May 7, the

Continued on page 2, col 4

England clean up their act — and win

By Damian Whitworth

THE England cricket team, under pressure to smarten up both their play and their dress, did just that at Headingley yesterday. They rang the changes with a tidy victory, after a shaky start, over Australia and turned in a solid team performance in the fashion stakes.

The Surrey pair Adam Hoggie and Graham Thorpe rescued England to give the home side a six-wicket victory in the first one-day international. Hoggie,

who was named man-of-the-match, ended the game with a mighty six over square-leg to finish with an unbeaten 66, his first international 50.

Thorpe made the top score with 75, his 12th international half-century, as England set 171 to win, reached the target in 40.1 of their 50 overs. The left-hander overcame the threat of Shane Warne, who switched ends twice but never settled down on a cold, dark day.

The England captain Mike Atherton said: "We bowled and fielded well and

then Adam and Graham saw us home from a difficult position."

Earlier this week it emerged that the England team had been issued with a 28-page rule book with strict instructions on their dress, diet and deportment. Yesterday they duly turned out in smart uniform kit with the England and Wales cricket board crest of a coronet and three lions and for the television interviews they wore traditional cricket caps.

England triumph, page 48

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Blair pledges new era of dialogue with EU leaders

By Philip Webster, Political Editor, and Charles Bremner in Brussels

TONY Blair will today promise a fresh start in Britain's relations with Europe, declaring that it will be "dialogue and not war".

But when he makes his first appearance on the European stage at a special summit of European Union leaders at Noordwijk in The Netherlands, Mr Blair will say that for him the bottom line will always be what is in Britain's interests. And he will give a warning about the direction of the EU, saying that the "elites" are paying too little attention to ordinary people.

"It is a question of Britain first," will be the message that the Prime Minister gives to his fellow leaders. And he will swiftly underline it by making plain that he will not agree to any weakening of Britain's authority over its border controls. He will also make a plea

for a "people's Europe" and pledge to stand in the way of any attempt to create a United States of Europe.

With his European colleagues looking for signs that Mr Blair might be ready to compromise, ministers were stressing yesterday that Mr Blair will today be opening a new era of "constructive engagement". He will pledge today that "we intend to end the air of impotence and defeatism which characterised the last government's attitude to Europe".

However, at the gathering which has been called to prepare for the crucial summit at Amsterdam next month, at which a new treaty on the future of the EU is to be signed, Mr Blair intends to leave his colleagues in no doubt that he will be just as tough on specific issues as his

Conservative predecessors. He is to demand legal authority for British frontier controls and its control over immigration and asylum to be written into the Amsterdam treaty. "There is no question of us giving up our border controls," Mr Blair will say.

The Dutch presidency of the EU, backed by France and Germany, have tabled a treaty text calling for the abolition of national vetoes over asylum and immigration policy three years after the new treaty comes into effect.

Mr Blair's insistence on recognition in the treaty of Britain's stance rather than a series of opt-outs, which Government officials have suggested he does not regard as sufficient, is clearly intended to prove to his fellow leaders that he will be no pushover.

The Prime Minister will also join with leaders from Sweden, Finland, Austria and Ireland to resist strongly Franco-German proposals for the EU to become a potential rival to Nato.

The arrival of the Labour team, with its promise to "take Britain off the sidelines" and back into EU business, prompted delight across the EU earlier this month. But old anxieties have returned as London has dug in its heels on frontiers, defence, foreign policy and other issues, leading a French diplomat to say "the music has certainly changed, but the words sound rather familiar".

Mr Blair yesterday disclosed he will not be ordering the removal of security gates and barriers in Downing Street. He said in a Commons written reply: "Security measures at Downing Street are kept under constant review and our advice is at present they should remain."

John Lloyd, page 20
Leading article, page 21

Bonn softens stance on mad cow disease

By Roger Boyes, in Bonn, and Michael Hornsby

GERMANY eased its hardline stance on "mad cow" disease yesterday, conceding for the first time that the transmission of the disease from cow to calf was "very unlikely".

The admission by the Federal Agriculture Ministry does not mean the ban on British beef is about to be lifted but suggests Bonn may be taking a more pragmatic approach to a problem that has bedevilled relations between Britain and the rest of Europe. Factors of maternal transmission of BSE have fuelled demands in the European Union for a more extensive cull of British cattle at risk that under way.

British research suggests that maternal transmission does occasionally occur but

not often enough to prolong the epidemic or to warrant a more extensive cull. If that is accepted in Bonn, the Government could find it easier to get agreement on relaxing the beef export ban, at least for meat from Northern Ireland, where there has been little BSE.

Some 14,000 offspring of cattle originating from Britain or Switzerland have been quarantined in Germany since the discovery of a BSE-infected Galloway cow in Westphalia at the end of last year. The cow was later found to be an import from Britain but confusion over its origin was enough to spark a new wave of mad cow panic in Germany.



Mo Mowlam, Northern Ireland Secretary, arriving for a Cabinet meeting yesterday

Protestants braced for loss of historic seat of power

By Nicholas Watt, Chief Ireland Correspondent

UNIONISTS were braced last night for the loss of Belfast City Council, the citadel of Protestant power in Ulster.

Early results from Wednesday's local elections in Northern Ireland showed that Sinn Féin and the Social Democratic and Labour Party had polled strongly throughout Belfast at the expense of Unionists.

If the trend continued today, when the final wards are counted, Unionists could lose control of the council they have ruled since the authority was given its Royal Charter by Queen Victoria in 1888. The result would pave the way for the first nationalist Lord Mayor in the history of Belfast.

With 15 of the 51 seats in Belfast declared last night,

Sinn Féin's vote had increased by 3.9 per cent. Sydney Elliott, Northern Ireland's leading psephologist, predicted that non-Unionists would win 26 seats and the Unionists would take 25. The two nationalist parties would not have overall control of the council, however, because the middle-of-the-road Alliance Party would hold the balance of power.

The loss of Belfast would have huge symbolic importance for Unionism. Londonderry, the other main city council, has been controlled by nationalists for years.

One of the SDLP's gains yesterday came in the Balmoral area of South Belfast, which was a strongly Unionist area until the 1960s. Middle-class Catholics have been moving

into the area from West Belfast, prompting Protestants to move to outlying areas such as North Down.

Martin Morgan, a leading member of the SDLP in Belfast, said that he hoped the strong showing by nationalists would end tribal politics in the city. "The symbolic posts in this city must be rotated between the two traditions. We do not want to see the tribal politics of Unionists being replaced by other tribalism," he said.

Sinn Féin had a strong showing at the general election, increasing its share of the vote to 16 per cent. Gerry Adams, the party president, swept aside the SDLP in West Belfast with a majority of nearly 10,000.

Nursery vouchers to be scrapped in July

Free nursery places will be available for every four-year-old from September next year, the Government promised yesterday when it announced the abolition of nursery vouchers.

The £1,100 vouchers will be scrapped at the end of the summer term. David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary said. But some parents who want a private nursery or playgroup place may have to apply for a certificate until free places are agreed.

Mr Blunkett said that £674 million from the voucher scheme would go directly to local authorities, which will have until next April to set out which providers receive state funding so that they can offer free places.

Counties fight capping

Three county councils said that they would challenge a decision by John Prescott, the Environment Secretary, to cap their budgets, forcing them to impose swingeing cuts on services. Oxfordshire, Somerset and Warwickshire have been given four weeks in which to attempt to persuade Mr Prescott to change his mind. If the county councils fail, they will have to cut £6 million, £3.4 million and £2 million respectively from their budgets.

Commons circus act

A part-time circus performer and cycling fanatic announced yesterday an attempt to pedal 200 yards along a steel tightrope 50ft to 80ft above the Thames to the House of Commons. If he is successful, Adam Harper would be the first person recorded to make a bicycle tightrope crossing of the river. To add extra "zip" to his feat, he plans to ride a Zike, one of the electronic vehicles that emerged from Sir Clive Sinclair's workshop.

Bullfrog barrier

New laws to crack down on the illegal trade in rare and endangered wildlife are to be introduced, including bigger fines and longer prison sentences for smugglers. The government announcement came as 49 foreign plants and animals were added to the list of those in which trade is controlled. They include the American bullfrog and roared terrapin, which threaten wildlife here, and other species considered to be at risk in their own countries.

Women shooters protest

Leading women clay-pigeon shooters, including England internationals, are boycotting the World Beretta Shooting Championships over prize money. About half the women entered withdrew after Beretta offered luxurious prizes for men and a small cash sum for women. The winner will get the use of an Aston Martin for a week and an expensive Swiss watch. The second and third get a watch plus prize money while the ladies champion wins £100.

Lady Tryon goes home

Lady Tryon, right, who broke her back and fractured her skull in a fall from the third floor of a rehabilitation clinic a year ago, has been discharged from hospital. The 49-year-old Australian-born friend of the Prince of Wales, who gave her the nickname Kangy, has returned to the family home at Great Durnford, Wiltshire, from Salisbury District Hospital.



Cot death warning

Babies who sleep on used mattresses are more at risk from cot death, according to a four-year study by the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Glasgow. The danger arises from dirt in old mattresses that might block holes for ventilation and drainage. Parents of newborn babies are advised to buy a new mattress or ensure the old one is covered in clean plastic for each baby. Earlier research has highlighted the risks of smoking and lying a baby on its stomach to sleep.

Big Ben runs out of time

The most famous clock in the world, Big Ben, is to be stopped for at least two days for "major surgery and possible transplant". Engineers, who have been investigating a problem relating to bearings in the "mains going train" - a key part of its mechanism - have decided that it will have to be stopped for a day while they examine the equipment causing the problem. A shaft might have to be removed, and it will take another day to reassemble.

Bark drug's cancer hope



The bark of an African shrub has produced a drug which may be able to starve cancer to death. Combretastatin, made from the bark of the African Bush Willow, above, kills tumours by cutting off their blood supply. In tests at Mount Vernon Hospital, Middlesex, the drug has shown remarkable results. The journal *Cancer Research* reports. With radiotherapy or chemotherapy the drug may prove a powerful addition to the doctor's armoury.

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Labour

Continued from page 1
first day peers and MPs returned to Parliament after the election and has sat since on the Labour benches.

His move to Labour came as a shock to party officials in the Lords, who knew nothing of the decision. Lord Strathclyde, Tory opposition Chief Whip in the Lords, had not been told about the move either. "It is a surprise," he said.

However, Lord Rothermere's decision to sit on the Labour benches does not come entirely out of the blue. He has been hinting at his possible support for many months. He was quoted yesterday in one of his newspapers, the London *Evening Standard*, as saying that Labour "are carrying out so many policies I believe in".

Through his office, he said in a statement: "The Government is doing all the things the last Government should have done, but failed to do."

His office added: "This is no more than a statement of approval of how the new Government has got off to a good start. It is really to leave the door open and see where it goes. He and other newspapers were more than a little disillusioned with the last Government."

The spokesman confirmed that one of the issues Lord Rothermere is concerned about is Britain's strict quarantine laws. "He lives in Paris, he does have pets, and they are obviously forbidden to come into this country under the



Rothermere: worried by quarantine laws

present legislation. He, with many dog owners, would like to see a relaxation of the rules with the proper tagging and vaccination."

Although the *Daily Mail* and *The Mail on Sunday* backed the Conservatives at the election, the *Evening Standard* supported Tony Blair. Lord Rothermere has dined privately with the Labour leader this year and publicly praised him in newspaper interviews before the general election. He told the *Financial Times*: "Tony Blair is a very capable, very charming, very astute man, full of enthusiasm and drive."

Vivyan Harmsworth, director of corporate affairs at Associated Newspapers, said of Mr Blair's editorship of the *Daily Mail* that the newspaper "will continue in the vein he wishes it to. He is very much in charge."

No 10 man to be our envoy in Canberra

By Valerie Elliott

ALEX ALLAN, Principal Private Secretary in the Prime Minister's office in the most difficult days of John Major's tenure, is to be the High Commissioner in Australia. He will leave Downing Street next month.

His post is to be filled by Jonathan Powell, 40, Tony Blair's Chief of Staff and a former diplomat. It will be the first time a political appointee has held this post at the heart of government. While some of Whitehall traditionalists raised their eyebrows, others saw it as a "very positive move". Mr Powell is keeping up a family tradition - his older brother, Sir Charles Powell, was Private Secretary to Margaret Thatcher.

Mr Allan, 46, a former Treasury official, has been at No 10 for more than five years. An Old Harrovian and son of a peer, Lord Allan of Kilma-new, Mr Allan had wanted to return to Australia for some time after being seconded to the High Commission by the Treasury in the early 1980s. He will replace Sir Roger Carrick, who has completed his three-year term of office.

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Man wins second chance to prevent wife's abortion

By Shirley English

A HUSBAND attempting to stop his estranged wife from having an abortion will continue his fight in the appeal court today after earlier fearing the termination might have already taken place.

James Kelly, 28, from Inverkeithing, Fife, succeeded yesterday in having a temporary ban on the operation reinstated 24 hours after it had been lifted, only to hear he might have been too late.

As he lodged his appeal yesterday the court was told by lawyers for his wife, Lynne, 21, a cabaret singer, that she might have taken advantage of the one-day delay in proceedings to abort the foetus. Anne Smith, QC, for Mrs Kelly, told the three appeal judges at the Second Division of the Court of Session in Edinburgh that as she spoke the operation might have already begun.

She told Lord Cullen, the Lord Justice Clerk, sitting with Lords Sutherland and Wylie, "I should advise the court that those instructing me learnt last night from her father that a termination operation was planned for this morning. That operation will either now have taken place or be in the course of taking place."

The judges decided to reimpose the court ban and a copy was faxed to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, where the termination was thought to be taking place. It was confirmed later that Mrs Kelly had not ended the pregnancy.

The battle over the baby



Lynne Kelly: thought to have been in hospital

began last Thursday when Mr Kelly, a roofer, was granted an emergency interim interdict stopping his wife, who is three months pregnant, from having an abortion. The operation was due to proceed the following day. He is thought to be the first father in Britain to be granted the legal means to delay, even temporarily, an abortion taking place.

The couple had separated two weeks earlier after a short but stormy marriage in which each accused the other of violence and neglecting their 18-month-old daughter, Hazel. In seeking an abortion Mrs Kelly told doctors her husband was violent, something he denied.

On Wednesday, after a full hearing in private, the abortion ban was recalled by Lord Eassie at the Court of Session in Edinburgh. He upheld earlier decisions by English

courts and ruled that a husband had no rights in law to interfere with the decision of his wife or her doctors.

Mr Kelly immediately instructed his solicitors to appeal and at the preliminary hearing yesterday the judgment was overruled and the temporary ban reimposed pending the full appeal today.

Brendan Gerard, for the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, said he was relieved to hear the foetus was alive. He said the case highlighted the need for a tighter abortion law in which there had to be medical reasons for a termination.

Mr Kelly is seeking custody of his daughter and the unborn baby, who he insists he wants to bring up himself. He claims his wife gave false information to doctors about his violence and therefore their decision was based on incorrect information. Mrs Kelly strongly disputes that.

Professor Sheila McLean, director of medical law and ethics at the University of Glasgow, expressed surprise over the ban. "I will be interested to see on what grounds the husband's appeal has been based," she said. "I expect he will challenge the decision of the doctors, as clearly fathers have no rights in law to intervene."

Wendy Sheehan, Mr Kelly's solicitor, said: "He is not viewed as having parental rights over a child not yet born. The main legal question therefore is does he have the right to bring the action at all?"



Andre Chadwick, Rosie Clayton, Sarah Jones and Juliette May: ran out of food as they waited for rescue from a disintegrating ice pack

Ice girls fly home after five-day Polar ordeal

By Tim Jones

FOUR women who endured five days marooned in atrocious weather on a disintegrating Arctic Ocean ice pack arrived back in Britain yesterday.

The four, part of the first all-female expedition to the North Pole, had eaten the last of their food and were enduring temperatures of -40C

before a supply plane finally managed to reach them. Rosie Clayton, 37, the Queen Mother's great-niece, was in the party, which had managed to complete its 110-nautical-mile leg of the expedition before the weather closed in.

Sarah Jones, 28, Juliette May, 33, and Andre Chadwick, 32, made up the rest of the group for "Penguin Team Delta", one of five teams in the

polar relay. They were greeted by family and friends at Heathrow airport, London. Mrs May was met by husband Fred, who has been minding their son Jack. He said: "I have had a two-year-old son to look after so I think we have been expending as many calories as they have."

Mrs Clayton said: "It is great to be back. It was beautiful out there but

was hard and tough and such an expedition is by nature frightening." She added: "We were never really worried about our safety because we had been well trained."

Mrs Clayton said she hoped the final group - Zoe Hudson, Lucy Roberts, Pam Oliver and Caroline Hamilton, the expedition leader - would become the first all-woman team to reach the Pole.

Cyclist is fined £700 for road rage punch

By Lin Jenkins

A CYCLIST flung down his machine in the path of traffic and punched a woman driver in a fit of "road rage" after she sounded her horn at him, a court was told yesterday.

Anthony Arden, 53, walked up to the open window of a car being driven by Carole Bunce, advertising director of *Vanity Fair*, and punched her on the right cheek. Her screams of shock alerted two police officers.

Bill Wheelson, for the prosecution at Hammersmith Road Magistrates' Court, central London, said the incident near Hyde Park Corner was the latest of a series of "road rage" cases to reach the court.

The incident had happened when Arden, a property developer, had "cut up" Ms Bunce's car on his bike at traffic lights last April. Ms Bunce hooted her horn and shouted "What are you doing?"

Arden, of Marylebone, pleaded guilty to common assault and was fined £700 and ordered to pay £250 compensation to his victim.

He said he had no idea why he had attacked Ms Bunce but added that he had been taking the anti-depressant drug Prozac.



Tarantula: hair-raising

Tarantulas bring tears to the eyes

By Ian Murray

STROKING a pet tarantula can ruin your eyesight. Researchers have discovered that the most popular non-poisonous varieties are covered in hairs that cause chronic eye inflammation, and it can last for years.

Tarantulas are "widely available and easily maintained," the researchers from Ninewells Hospital in Dundee write in the *British Medical Journal*. Unfortunately, the popular American varieties have evolved detachable hairs that cause stinging rashes.

Two patients who owned Chilean Rose tarantulas had inadvertently transferred the hairs to their eyes after handling the spiders. Despite treatment, their eyes remained inflamed and painful after six years.

Royal visit will make history on Internet

By Nick Nuttall

THE Queen will today become the first reigning monarch to appear live on the Internet. Images of her opening a factory in northeast England will be available on computers around the world.

The idea was developed by Siemens, the electronics company, whose £1.1 billion semiconductor plant on north Tyneside the Queen will be opening.

A spokesman for Buckingham Palace said yesterday that the Queen considered the Internet "an interesting development... and she has been kept informed".

The Queen's tour around the factory, which makes chips for computers and semiconductors, will be fed to Siemens' computer in London and from there relayed on the World Wide Web at five frames a second with sound.

James Gardiner, of Demon Internet, which is providing the service for Siemens, said: "The Queen will be able to see herself on the Net. She will visit a training area at the factory where there will be a computer showing the event."

The visit will be shown from about 12.15pm at <http://www.siemens.demon.net/>

Cambridge classicists fail grade for Latin epigram

By David Chantier

THE decline of Classics was blamed yesterday for Cambridge University's decision to withhold an annual award, once won by Coleridge, for the composition of a Latin poem.

Dons had hoped for some lively submissions inspired by this year's chosen theme: Betty Boothroyd, the Speaker. But none of the handful of epigrams they received was deemed good enough to win the Sir William Browne Medal, first given in the 18th century.

Professor James Diggle, a judge and previous winner of the medal for his 1964 poem on unilateral nuclear disarmament, said: "If you look back to when I was an undergraduate a lot more people composed Greek and Latin verse. But with the gradual reduction in Greek and Latin taught in schools, they have to spend more of their time on basic language work here and do not get to the standards of the past."

Four medals are usually awarded every year, two for epigrams, one Latin and one

The Times today tries its hand where Cambridge's finest scholars failed. Our columnist Philip Howard was inspired by the thought of Betty Boothroyd to compose the following epigram:

*Copia verborum et vis et mala fama Senatum
Conturbant? Superest Curia paene, clamor,
Flagitiumne Patrum Conscriptorumque tumultum?*

Desine Praefectum querere, Quiaere Deam!
Which in translation means: Is the House of Commons in an uproar with excess verbosity and shouting and unparliamentary language? Are you crying at the box that Parliament cannot survive the sleaze and bad behaviour of its MPs? Stop looking for a male Speaker. Send for Betty.

Greek, and two for longer odes, again one Latin and one Greek. Although there are 250 classics students at Cambridge, all three went to one student, Matthew McCullagh of Trinity College.

Professor Diggle said the study of Classics at Cambridge had changed in recent years to focus more on cultural and historical areas. "To get three out of four medals is really quite good going. We just don't get people prepared to spend that amount of time writing these things."

Miss Boothroyd comment-

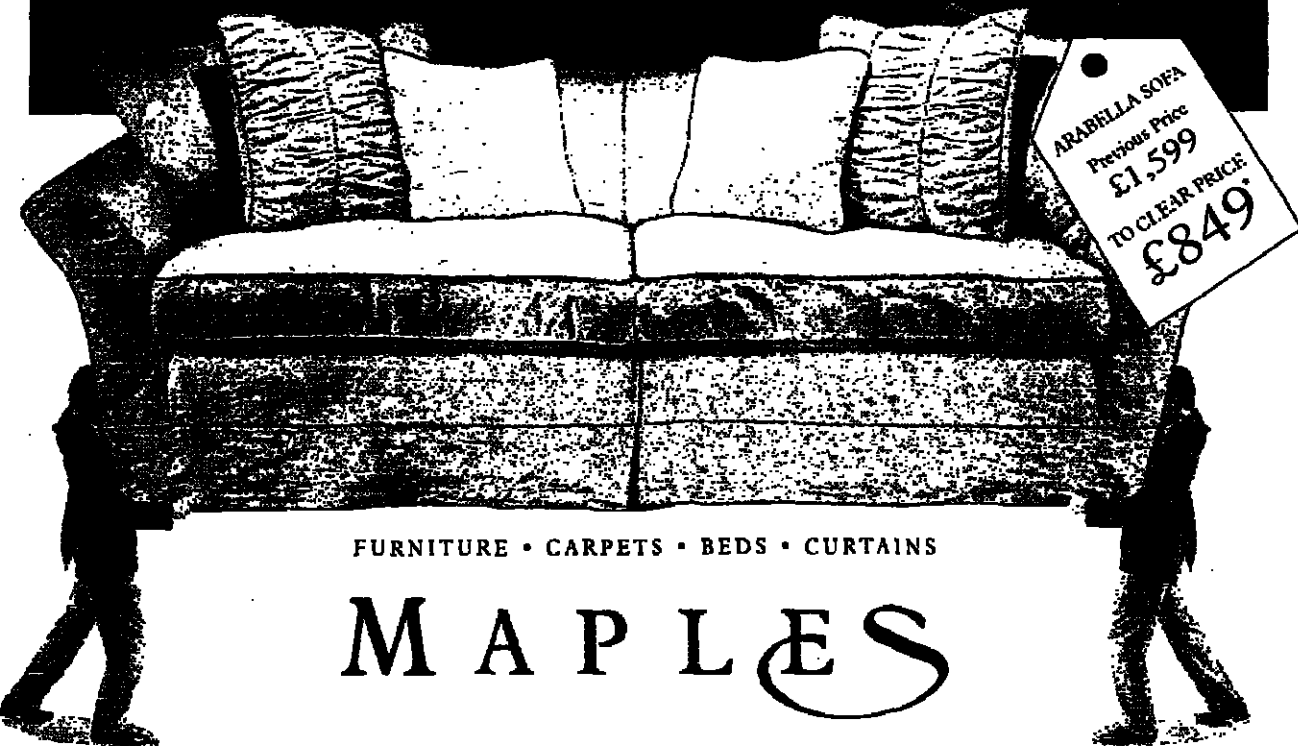
ed: "I'm disappointed that I failed to provide inspiration for the undergraduates of Cambridge, but I wonder if it may have had something to do with the second-class political status of women in ancient Greece."

An epigram is a pithy poem, usually of four lines, which conveys an amusing point and has an ingenious turn at the end. The Cambridge judges were looking for one which obeyed strict rules of metre, with non-rhyming couplets in alternating hexameter and pentameter.

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Pope hails Augustine as Apostle of English

By Ruth Gledhill

THE Pope has marked the 1,400th anniversary celebrations of the arrival of St Augustine in Britain with a letter to Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, in which he prays for unity "without seam or tear".

The letter comes as the Christian community prepares for the focal point of the celebrations, a service for pilgrims from all the churches at Canterbury Cathedral on Monday, at which the Prince of Wales will be present and when the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, will preach. On Tuesday, Benedictine monks from Anglican and Roman Catholic monasteries throughout Britain will sing Latin vespers at Canterbury, when Cardinal Hume will preach.

The Pope makes clear the importance he is attaching to the celebrations. He describes Augustine as "the Apostle of the English" and says his mission consolidated Christianity in Britain, giving it strong links with Rome.



David Gamble: "We have no reason to believe the problem is worse than elsewhere"

Church workers 'betrayed the trust placed in them'

In an unprecedented move, Methodist leaders have acknowledged that women have been abused by clergy or lay workers, Ruth Gledhill reports

THE Methodist Church is the first mainstream denomination to address the issue of sexual harassment of adults by clergy or lay workers.

A working party was set up on the recommendation of the Methodist Church's executive in 1995 because it was felt disciplinary procedures were not working effectively. The working party, convened by the Rev David Gamble, received 28 written submissions and 11 oral accounts of harassment. Identities of the victims have been closely guarded.

Mr Gamble, family and personal relationships secretary, said: "We were aware of the issue and felt it was appropriate to find out what the situation is and come up with an effective response. But we have absolutely no reason to believe the problem is worse than anywhere else."

"We are simply trying to be at the front of the field in terms of good practice. The Church sets itself up to be a safe place and that means we have a duty to make sure that it is so."

The report says that in rare cases reporting an abuse resulted in an immediate and positive response but in many

others excuses were given. In one case a counsellor refused to act because he was about to go on holiday. Another was advised: "Say nothing because no-one will believe you and the church people will close ranks against you because the church's reputation is more important than the individual."

A woman who has been harassed for 20 years by a leading figure in the Church is still suffering harassment but refuses to take formal action because of her concerns for the man's family. Another says: "Who would believe my word, an unknown, young, single laywoman against a well thought of, middle-aged married minister?"

Many cases grew out of a relationship where the man was in a position of authority, such as a pastoral or counselling relationship. In three

cases the woman was below or had just reached the age of consent. In one case a full sexual relationship began as soon as the woman reached 16.

Other cases arose where women entering the ministry became close to male colleagues and were subjected to unwanted attention. One male minister told a woman: "If you want to be one of us you will just have to put up with us."

One woman told of what happened after she was accepted for training for the ministry. "Soon after I told my minister of my call to the ministry he came to my house telling me he wanted my help," she said.

There were things he could not share easily with his wife as she was not interested in them or him. He would like me, he said, to be his confidante. Frankly, I was flattered. I was young and, I guess, gullible, and it seemed a great honour."

He began to visit her, greeting her with a hug and a peck on the cheek. "I accepted this as a sign of trust and friendship," she said.

But one day he tried to fondle her bottom as she was making coffee. She tried to put it out of her mind. Some time later he drove her to the district synod and on the way home suggested they stopped for a drink. They had a couple of glasses and at her home he followed her in and tried to kiss her. She was too embarrassed to confront him and assumed he would accuse her of leading him on. It never occurred to her to complain.

In the Church of England, the Oxford diocese has published guidelines for clergy on how to avoid being compromised in situations of pastoral care. In the Roman Catholic Church, of England and Wales, pastoral and procedural guidelines were published in 1994 on how to deal with allegations of child abuse against clergy, starting from the premise that the allegations were true.

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The pews causing consternation among parishioners

Cranmer church falling between chairs and pews

By A Staff Reporter

REVOLUTIONARY thinking worthy of Thomas Cranmer, a former rector, is sweeping through an 800-year-old church in Hereford and Worcester. And not all the congregation is being swept along with it.

St Giles Church at Bredon, where Cranmer, the first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, took up his first humble post, is considering ripping out 19th century oak pews and replacing them with more comfortable chairs.

Cranmer, who went on to compile the First Prayer Book and was responsible for declaring four of Henry VIII's marriages invalid, fell out of favour in the reign of Mary I and was burnt as a heretic. The reaction in Bredon to the possible fate of the pews may not be quite as harsh, but parishioners cannot disguise their disgust.

Ruth Hall, chairman of the Friends of St Giles, said: "I am not in favour of this suggestion at all. The pews are pretty special and I certainly don't approve of replacing them with chairs."

The problem arose when it became evident that a 30-seat section of pews would have to be removed to replace their rotting plinths. A parochial church council sub-committee was set up to look into the

possibility of taking out the rest of the pews, which can seat up to 230 people, and replacing them with chairs.

Sylvia Dyer, a former churchwarden who spoke out against the plan at a village meeting two weeks ago, said yesterday that 115 people had telephoned with their support. Miss Dyer, 72, who has worshipped at St Giles for more than 50 years, said: "Only 15 have phoned to say they think the chairs would be a good idea. I don't think the church should be throwing out perfectly good pews. They date back to at least 1827 and the ends are carved with very decorative patterns."

However, Derrick Granger, the church organist and chairman of Bredon Parish Council, said: "Over the years, the church has evolved its style to suit the period and maybe it's time for this to happen again."

Canon John Ridout, the vicar, said a number of parishioners had approached him with the suggestion: "All churches change interiors to accommodate the congregation as the years pass."

He added: "The matter is being discussed by the parochial church council but I think the way we reach our decision will be more important than the decision itself."



Canon John Ridout, vicar of St Giles Church in Bredon, where Thomas Cranmer served as rector

betray
in them

Island romance that ended in a death sentence

FOR the briefest of moments, as Janette Pink began her testimony in a Cyprus court-room yesterday, she stole a sidelong glance at the man she once loved, who sat barely ten yards away. As he fidgeted with his green T-shirt, advertising one of his favourite drinking haunts on the island, she narrowed her eyes and quickly looked away.

Pavlos Georgiou, 40, had been brought on a judge's orders from an Aids hospital ward a mile away, where he had admitted himself hours before standing trial in Larnaca accused of infecting his British lover with Aids.

For the next two hours, as the divorced mother of two recounted how their affair had begun in 1994, she avoided looking across at the dock where at times Mr Georgiou was barely visible as he slouched low in his chair, staring constantly at the floor.

Her black and white print dress hung limply from her emaciated body as she described in detail how their friendship, which began after she moved to the holiday island after her divorce in 1993, turned from a love affair to a death sentence.

Never once did she lose her composure as she admitted her naivety at having unprotected sex with Mr Georgiou and how, after being diagnosed as HIV, she became pregnant by him and had an abortion. Asked by Maria Malachou, the chief prosecutor, why she had not used a condom, she said: "We were not two youngsters having lots of affairs. It never occurred to

Daniel McGrory reports from Larnaca on the British divorcee and mother of two accusing a Cypriot fisherman of infecting her with Aids

us. We had both been in marriages with children for 20 years, so it did not enter into my head."

Friends on the island told her of a newspaper article which suggested Mr Georgiou's wife, Martha, was dying of Aids. "He said it was lies because people were jealous of him." He showed her a life insurance policy that he had just taken out as proof he did not have Aids.

Mrs Pink was persuaded by friends to have an Aids test in March 1994, which proved negative. Later that summer Mr Georgiou's 34-year-old wife died in London. A test in November, in October 1994, proved she was infected.

"I told Pavlos, 'I know Martha died of Aids, I know you are HIV and I know you have infected me'. I asked him why he did not tell me. He did not have an answer. He did not apologise."

She explained why she decided to stay with him in the resort of Ayia Napa rather than return home to her parents in Basildon, Essex. "It made sense if we were both infected to stay together. I loved him."

In January 1996 she discovered she was pregnant. By now she knew that Mr Georgiou's youngest son, Rafael, now four, was born with

the virus. She decided to have a termination, fearful her child would be infected or that she was unlikely to live long enough to care for it.

She was caring for Mr Georgiou's four children but grew too weak from the illness to cook and clean for him. She described being frightened of his violent temper and his assaults on his children, and moved back to her apartment. As her weight dropped to less than five stones she returned to Britain and began her campaign to prosecute Mr Georgiou. "The knowledge of what Pavlos had actually done to me sunk in and I felt something should be done about it."

The case continues.



Diana with Jemima Khan and her son Sulaiman. The princess is helping raise £17 million for cancer treatment

Diana flies to Pakistan to aid Khan hospital

DIANA, Princess of Wales, arrived in Pakistan yesterday to help raise money for her friend Imran Khan's cancer hospital for the poor.

The Princess stayed cool in the 104 degree heat with traditional outfits. She stepped from billionaire financier Sir James Goldsmith's private Boeing 757 in a powder-blue shalwar kameez, then changed to turquoise and kingfisher blue. The Princess arrived at Lahore with former Pakistan cricket captain Imran's British-born wife Jemima - Sir James's daughter - and the Khans' six-month-old son Sulaiman. After changing, Diana was driven with Jemima to Imran's cancer hospital for the main business of the day: a fundraising lunch of lamb and chicken at £750 a head - with 60 of Lahore's richest VIPs. Imran has enlisted the Princess's help to launch a new £17 million endowment appeal to secure long-term finance for the free hospital for the poor.

Teacher disciplined for prom night kiss

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A MARRIED French teacher has been disciplined after allegedly accepting a kiss from a sixth-form boy at a school prom a year ago.

Jane Wardman, head of languages at Prince Henry's Grammar School in Otley, west Yorkshire, will, however, be allowed to return to her post at the comprehensive school after appearing before the governing body's disciplinary sub-committee.

Mrs Wardman has been on sick leave for nearly 12 months after the party at the Craiglands Hotel in Ilkley. Students at the sixth-form leaving prom said a male sixth-former who seemed the worse for drink gave her a peck on the cheek.

A former pupil who was at the party said: "I didn't see

what happened, but we later found out that one of the lads, who was drunk, had kissed Mrs Wardman on the cheek. I think the whole thing has been blown out of all proportion."

The student involved has not been named.

The school governors issued a short statement which read: "A hearing has taken place before a panel of the school's governing body to consider Mrs Wardman's professional conduct and her health."

"Details of the hearing are confidential between the panel and Mrs Wardman but the outcome of the hearing is that Mrs Wardman will resume her duties as soon as possible. The governing body have no further comment to make."

Michael Franklin, the school's head teacher, said: "In view of the fact that the governing body's disciplinary sub-committee has met and made a decision, it would be inappropriate for me to say anything else."

He went on: "Mrs Wardman has been on sick leave and continues to be on sick leave. I am not in a position to comment upon any other aspects of the matter."

North London Railways asks us to point out that its apology to passengers for failures on the Northampton-London service was for two specific incidents, and not the service in general.

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Schoolboy dies of heart attack after taking GCSE exam

By MICHAEL HOSKIN

A SCHOOLBOY died from a heart attack 20 minutes after finishing a GCSE history examination, it was disclosed yesterday. Thomas Hemming, 16, had had successful surgery for a heart condition as a baby.

He had ridden his new moped through the gates at Wymondham High School in Wymondham, Norfolk, on Tuesday when he lost control and crashed into a wall. Paramedics were unable to revive him and police at first treated his death as a road accident. But a post-mortem showed he had suffered no serious injuries and had died of a heart attack.

The teenager, who was sitting nine GCSEs, started his exams on Monday with geography. He died after sitting his second exam, the 90-minute history paper.

Roseline Hemming, his grandmother, said yesterday

A trial of a new cholesterol-lowering drug in heart disease patients has been halted because so many lives were being saved it would have been unethical to continue giving dummy pills to other patients in the study. It involved more than 9,000 men and women, aged 31-75, in Australia and New Zealand who had previously had a heart attack or who had had hospital treatment for unstable angina. Exact figures of lives saved in the trial of pravastatin will be known later this year.

that Thomas had waved goodbye to friends before setting off to ride the six miles home to Colton, near Norwich, where he lived with his parents, Martin and Judith, both 40, and sister Laura, 14. She added: "His friend told

me he saw him riding up the road perfectly well and not fooling around in any way. He certainly was not racing. Then he lost control and hit a wall. He tried to stand up, but collapsed. A lot of children saw what happened and were very distressed.

"The stress of the exam might have contributed, but Thomas was very confident and did not seem worried about his GCSEs. He had worked hard and expected to do quite well. He was a happy-go-lucky youngster who did not suffer from anxiety. He certainly did not work himself to death."

Thomas was born with the two main arteries to his heart transposed and had open-heart surgery at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London when he was nine months old. Doctors were confident he should lead a normal life. A slightly irregular heartbeat was detected at a check-up last



Thomas Hemming, who was described by his father as fit as a fiddle and the life and soul of any party

August and he was placed on a monitor for a day. However, doctors said there was no cause for concern.

Mr Hemming said: "He was as fit as a fiddle after he had his heart operation as a baby. He was the life and soul of any party and was a very

popular lad with loads of friends. He was very easy-going and never showed he was under any stress. He was a bright lad and had done some work for his exams but he never worried about them. I just think that he could have died at any time."

Tension and excitement can affect the vulnerable

Thomas Hemming had open-heart surgery in infancy to correct a congenital heart condition known as transposition of the great vessels.

The basic problem is that the aorta rises directly from the right ventricle and the pulmonary artery from the left, in the normal person, the reverse applies. As a result of the abnormality, unoxygenated blood is directed around the body and the tissues are starved of oxygen, the majority of the oxygenated blood going back to the lungs. Sufferers become so dangerously breathless that they are perpetually cyanosed (blue). Normal development is impossible because all the tissues are deprived of the essential oxygen.

Open-heart surgery now gives these children the opportunity to live normal lives, although the final degree of success of the operation depends on how many, if any, other congenital abnormalities associated with the transposition are present. The site of the trouble, near the conducting pathways of the heart, is one reason why children who have had trans-



Dr Thomas Stuttaford

position of the great vessels may later, even if they have had successful surgery, suffer irregularities of the rhythm of the heart, and even heart block. Complete heart block can cause dizziness, fainting or acute heart failure. Any of these symptoms could result in an accident. The answer in Thomas's case may never be fully revealed, but careful examination of the heart may give some clues as to what happened. It is perhaps noteworthy that Thomas was found to have a cardiac arrhythmia when examined in hospital last year, although 24-hour monitoring failed to demonstrate any serious cause for the arrhythmia.

It could be that the heart attack was precipitated by the history exam. Excitement or any emotional tension, fre-

quently triggers an irregular action of the heart in a vulnerable patient. However, parents can be confident that, although taking examinations is stressful, they will not cause heart attacks in children without underlying disease.

Thanks to modern surgery, Thomas Hemming survived a condition that previously killed the majority of babies born with it. The few survivors from childhood used to die as teenagers, having had an invalid life. Now the majority of patients are able to live normal lives, play games, as Thomas did, and take part in all other activities. It is possible that Thomas was one of the unlucky few who later developed potentially fatal cardiac arrhythmia.

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Satellite dish puts the lid on soggy microwave pies

THE Iceland frozen food chain has used satellite technology to produce a pie that emerges from the microwave oven with crisp pastry.

The 99p pie has a special lid and tray with antennae that reflect and deflect the microwave oven's rays, so that the pastry crisps and browns instead of becoming soggy as the pie heats up within.

Tested against traditionally cooked pies, the chicken and vegetable recipe surprised critics who believed that microwave ovens could never produce satisfactory pastry.

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Harrods: ox tongue £1.29 for 100g, Basturma salami £8.99 for 100g, BLT baguette £1.99.

Iceland: minced lamb cutlets £1.99 for eight, Chinese-style chicken breasts £1.99 for two, hash browns 69p for 680g, cappuccino gâteau £1.49 for 400g.

Kwik-Save: Ribena £1.35 for 600ml.

Typical tea bags £1.55 for 80, I Can't Believe It's Not Butter 85p for 500g, Oakdale raspberry mini-rolls 38p for six.

Marks & Spencer: reduced-fat coronation chicken £1.99, prawns with scallops £1.99, tomato and aubergine layer £2.29, peach water 99p for 4ltr, Neapolitan soft-scoop ice-cream £1.09.

Morrisons: frying steak £1.89 a lb, brisket £1.39 a lb, breaded haddock £1.59 for 400g, cherry tomatoes 99p for 400g, cantaloup melon 99p each.

Sainsbury's: smoked Scottish salmon £5.99 for 450g, chicken madras, korma, passanda or tikka masala £2.99 for 340g with free pilau rice, Jersey Royal new potatoes 29p a lb, cherries £1.99 a lb.

Sainsbury's: chicken fillets £4.25 for four (510g), fresh salmon steaks £7.95 a kg, breaded cod £2.49 for six portions (600g), large eggs £1.99 for 20.

Somerfield: pork boneless spare rib steaks £2.68 a kg, tomatoes 74p for 750g, mixed peppers 99p a lb, red potatoes 99p for 2.5kg, mango 69p.

Tesco: lamb loin chops £9.59 a kg, tuna loin £4.95 a lb, whole prawns 59p a 4lb, cauliflower 55p each, closed-cup mushrooms 99p a lb.

Waitrose: mini Melton Mowbray pork pies £1.35 for six, quiche lorraine £2.79 for 600g, blended olive oil £2.19 for 500ml, Florida pink grapefruit juice 79p for 400g.

ROBIN YOUNG

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Food and drinks firms accused over sugar-free claims

By GLEN OWEN

ALMOST half the claims for sugar-free food and drink are false and their labels often "irrelevant, irresponsible, illegal or illegible", a conference was told yesterday.

Analysis of more than 1,400 products by Action and Information on Sugars - a voluntary group of health professionals - found that misleading information about sugar levels was common on supermarket shelves.

Jack Winkler, the group's chairman, said: "According to the last national survey of eating habits, people need to cut their intake of sugars by 30 per cent, but manufacturers are making it hard for them by disguising sugar levels."

He told the group's conference in London: "Many labels are irrelevant, irresponsible, illegal or illegible." Labelling practice was like a pair of fishnet tights: "It gives the appearance of full coverage but is actually full of holes."

He said that the group had found more than 80 products that broke the law by claiming low sugar levels without specifying them, including 7Up from Britvic, Oasis from Coca-Cola Schweppes and Del Monte's canned fruits.

The report discovered 280 other products with legal but misleading claims, such as "no added sugar" on goods containing high levels of sug-



One of 80 products said to break label laws

ary concentrates. The authors of the report picked out Ribena soft drinks, Waitrose jams, baby products such as Ligo rusks and St Ivel fromage frais as particular offenders.

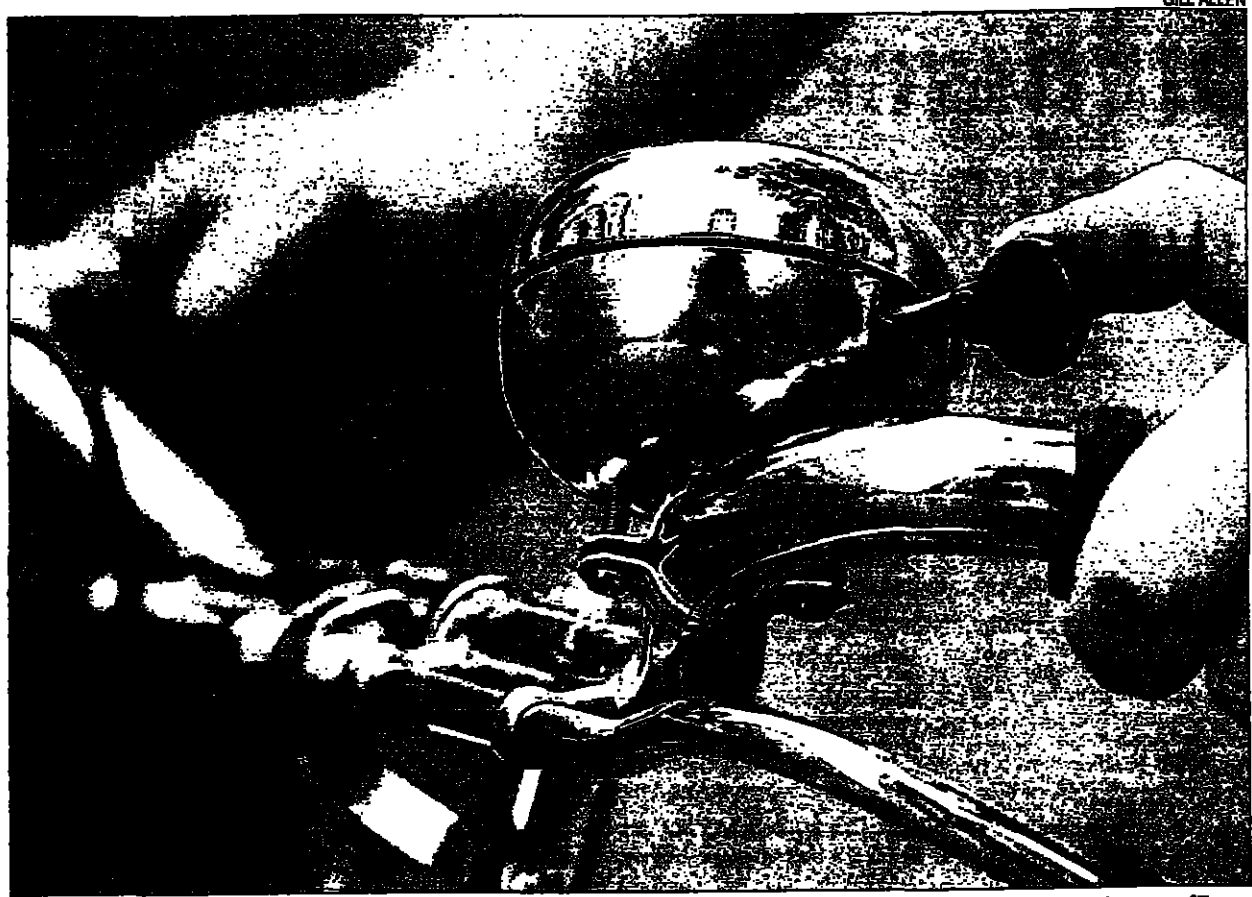
The group's researchers say the levels of sugar lurking under the labels varied widely. The "sugar-free" declaration on Wrigley's Orbit Gum was accurate but the same claim on Safeway's Instant Custard Mix disguised 28 grams of sugar. "No added sugar" on Asda's Swiss Style Muesli meant 1.3 grams of sugar and on Safeway's Wholewheat cereal it represented 28 grams.

Dr Winkler said that he was also concerned about the growth of "high energy" drinks, supposedly linked to increased sporting performance, which he said were simply drinks with a lot of sugar in them. "Unsubstantiated claims exploit the aspirations of young consumers."

He said that the group would be lobbying the Ministry of Agriculture and the nascent Food Standards Agency for a legal definition of sugar and financial penalties for transgressors.

Britvic and Coca-Cola Schweppes referred queries on their sugar claims to the British Soft Drinks Association. An association spokeswoman said: "All ingredients on our products are strictly regulated by the Government and must be clearly detailed on the ingredients panel. Whenever a new product is launched, the drinks companies consult closely with trading standards officers to make sure that the labels meet legislative requirements."

Quaker Oats called for a change in the law to let it claim on packets that porridge helps to prevent heart disease. It complained at a Royal Society of Medicine seminar on food labelling that it was restricted to saying oats could reduce blood cholesterol. Consumers needed to know that lower blood cholesterol was good for the heart.



The bicycle bell finds favour all round, although there is some concern that it may not be heard in today's traffic

Bicycle bell plan has ring of success

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

PEDESTRIANS and cyclists yesterday welcomed the Government's announcement that it was urgently considering making bells a compulsory ffitment on bicycles.

Baroness Hayman, the Roads Minister, said she was aware that there was widespread support for the mandatory ffitment of bells and was "looking at the issue as a matter of priority". It is understood it would not be illegal to ride a bicycle without a bell, but that machines would have to be sold with a bell fitted.

"We have been encouraging that it

should be a requirement that bells should be on bikes at the point of sale," said Chris Juden, technical officer of the Cyclists' Touring Club. "Often bikes come with a bell and the shops don't bother fitting them. Once they are on few people would take them off. But we don't regard bells as a big safety issue. I don't think a pedestrian has ever been saved by a bell. They are more useful for making journeys quicker for cyclists."

However, the Pedestrians' Association said bells would be very welcome and especially useful for the blind.

Mr Juden added that the touring club would also like lights made compulsory

on new bikes. At present only reflectors must be fitted by manufacturers, although it is illegal to ride at night without lights. Flashing lights are also illegal and can incur a fine, although this might change.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents said it tentatively welcomed the move, "but we would like to see some research done into what is the best form of warning signal in today's traffic noise."

Many cyclists favour a blast on a whistle. A spokesman for the Department of Transport said: "We have the best road safety record in the world so we must be doing something right."

NEWS IN BRIEF

BA aircraft in near-miss on runway

A British Airways 747 avoided a collision by seconds after air-traffic controllers shouted a warning that a plane had strayed into its path. Six tyres burst as the crew brought it to a halt 1,000ft from the other plane at Chicago airport. The London-bound passengers were unhurt because they were strapped in for take-off.

BBC apologises

The BBC made a public apology in the High Court to the Outward Bound Trust over allegations on Radio 4 that the educational charity had employed paedophiles and child abusers.

Rafting death

A student died after his white-water raft capsized at the National Water Sports Centre at Holme Pierrepont, near Nottingham. The 31-year-old, from Norwich, was rafting on the slalom course.

Chainstore fined

Laura Ashley was fined £3,500 by magistrates yesterday after admitting nine charges of placing misleading prices on products in its stores in Kings Lynn and Norwich, Norfolk.

£13,800 teddy

A teddy bear rescued from a house clearance in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1923 was sold for £13,800 by Christie's in London. The rare black bear, made by Steiff, went to a collector in Florida.

Bus passenger loses fare fight

By PAUL WILKINSON

A PROFESSOR who attempted to sue his local bus company for the price of a taxi ride he was forced to take because its bus failed to turn up lost his case yesterday.

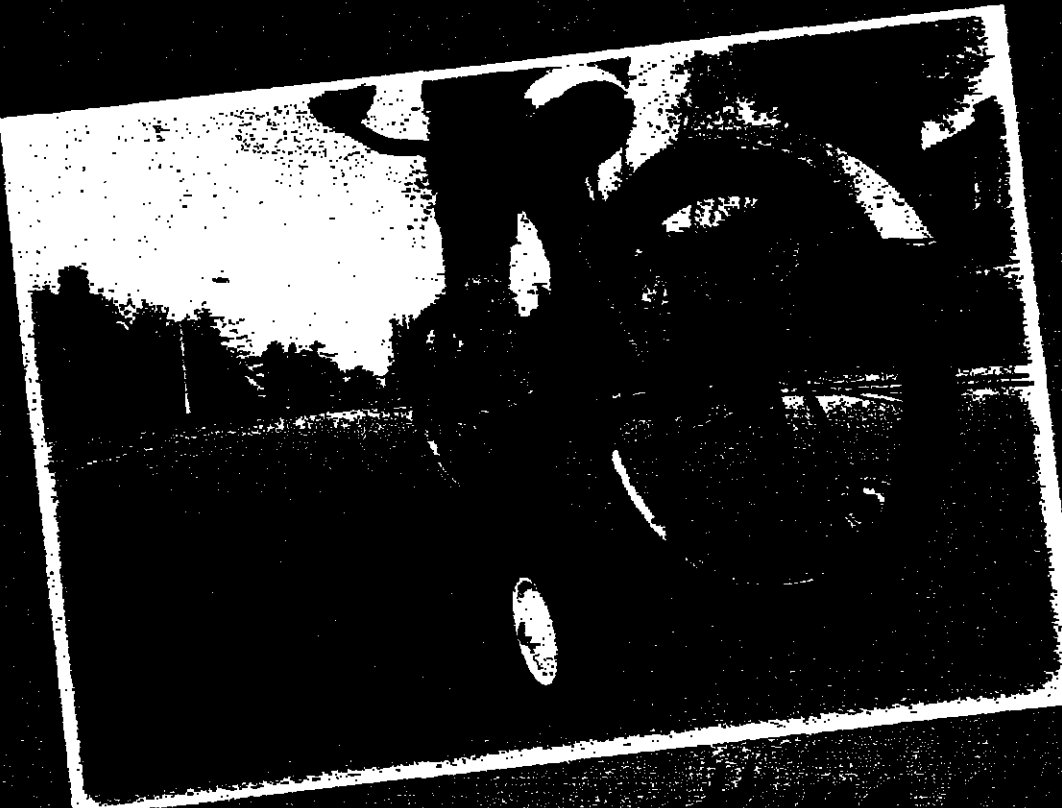
Dr Robert Stanton, 77, who helped to pioneer the development of the meat substitute Quorn, sued the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive for his £2.80 fare home last March.

The Professor of Botany, who lectured at the University of Malaya for eight years, said he had been left stranded by the mini-bus service introduced between Haworth and his home village of Stanbury while a road was closed due to strengthening work on a bridge. The transport executive said it was not responsible for Calder Coaches, which ran the link. At a hearing held

in private at Leeds County Court the judge found in favour of the executive after hearing that Dr Stanton had been away on holiday at the time it advertised the alternative bus times for the route.

Speaking outside the court, Dr Stanton said: "I have lost because the bus company has no statutory duty to the customer. I am convinced the bus traveller is seen as a second-class citizen in this country. I tried to point out to them today that Switzerland and Singapore both have excellent bus systems and it was about time Britain caught up."

Dr Stanton, who is also an expert in agriculture, horticulture and microbiogenetics, added: "They have not won the moral argument. I hope someone younger will bring a similar claim."



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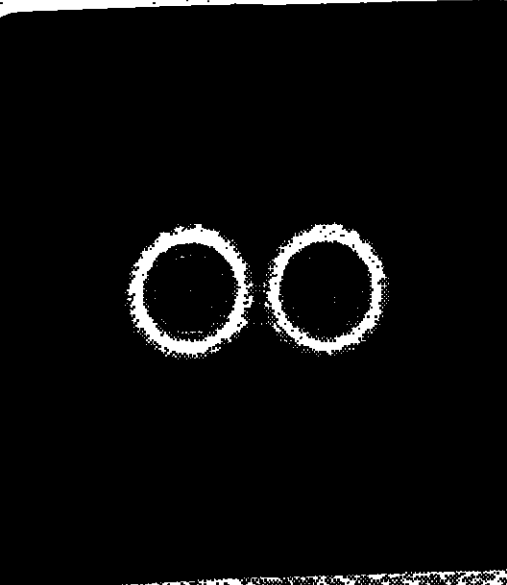


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Big ideas in a small space

Dobson diverts £100m from managers to bolster NHS care

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

FRANK DOBSON pledged immediate action yesterday to cut £100 million from NHS bureaucracy and spend it on breast cancer treatment and reducing waiting lists, after pronouncing himself "aghast" at the crisis facing the service.

The Health Secretary said the number on waiting lists was 100,000 higher than a year ago, that there was a shortage of nurses and doctors in some specialties and that a quarter of trusts and a third of health authorities were in deficit at the end of the financial year.

"Our inheritance is very poor," he said. "The figures show an increase in waiting times since the last quarter's figures, which were themselves a record high."

"We knew things were pre-

ty bad. But I can only say the more we discover the more we realise that we were not exaggerating."

He has deferred agreement for 1,000 GPs to become fundholders, saving £20 million. To save another £80 million, he has instructed the eight regional offices of the NHS executive and authorities in Wales and Scotland to agree budget reductions by the end of next month.

"I have also announced a programme of measures to stem the seemingly endless flow of invoices for just about every clinical procedure you can think of," he said. "It may be that some staff will lose their jobs but it is also likely that it will be done, at least in part, from jobs not being filled."

The £100 million represents just over a day's spending on the NHS. Mr Dobson is asking the NHS executive to examine scope for further reductions in bureaucracy next year and in the future.

He condemned fundholding for creating a two-tier system. However, there might be some elements of it which were useful and there would be pilot studies to find out what the best system would be in future. "The last thing we want is another reorganisation followed by another reorganisation to put right the things which were wrong with the previous reorganisation," Baroness Jay of Paddington, the minister in charge of the

HOW HEALTH SERVICE SHAPES UP

- The total number of patients waiting to be admitted to NHS hospitals in England at the end of March rose by 59,400 (5.4 per cent) from the previous quarter to 1,164,000
- The number of patients waiting more than one year rose by 9,200 to 31,000 over the quarter
- There are now 155 patients waiting for longer than the 18-month maximum period in the Patient's Charter
- Hospital bed numbers have fallen from 540,000 in 1961 to 300,000 in 1993 — although advances in medical science and technology mean the NHS does not require so many beds for patients for long periods
- Nurse numbers have fallen from 405,000 in 1989 to 250,000 in 1994. An NHS spokesman said the training of nurses had altered drastically since 1990 and, under a system called Project 2000, trainee nurses spend longer in the classroom and less time on the wards
- Numbers of senior managers are up from 4,600 in 1989 to 23,000 in 1994
- The number of GPs in England rose by 9 per cent between 1986 and 1996 (26,259 to 28,937) while women GPs increased from 22 per cent to 32 per cent
- Half of all trainees are now female; the number of trainees fell by 21 per cent over the decade

Health would "be fatally undermined if public health doctors become the victims of a wrongly directed drive against management spending."

"The scale of the problem cannot be addressed adequately simply by rerouting funds at the margin," he said.

The NHS Confederation, which represents all trusts, said it was in favour of reducing bureaucracy, "but it must not be at the expense of high quality managers in a £40 billion-a-year service."

Stephen Dorrell, the last Conservative Health Secretary, defended the Tories record on waiting lists. "The trend has actually been downwards for long waits," he said.

He said that the health service had to change all the time and, while that process had been under way over the past few years, it was essential that it continued: "The omens for that are not very good as the Government has put a further moratorium on change in the London hospitals until it comes up with a policy."

Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat health spokesman, said that urgent action was needed because the figures showed there had been a six-fold increase in waiting lists in the past year.

"Extra cash is needed if the NHS is to continue a comprehensive service," he said. "Labour are clutching at fig leaves to disguise their bleak spending plans. They have gone silent on their pledge to take 100,000 off waiting lists. Things are set to get worse."



Dobson: "aghast" at scale of the problems



Nurse Laura Hocken yesterday: "I have been called every expletive possible"

Fear and violence: my typical night in casualty

By KATELYN KNIGHT

A NURSE gave a graphic account of life on a casualty ward to a conference on hospital violence yesterday, saying she felt constantly threatened and in fear of attack.

Staff Nurse Laura Hocken, 28, said her worst fears were realised during an exhausting shift on New Year's Eve last year at the accident and emergency department of Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton.

"I came on duty at 9.15pm to an already chaotic department, with trolleys in corridors, ambulances arriving one after the other and patients and relatives demanding to know how long they would have to wait."

"By midnight the waiting area was standing room only and looked like a nightclub at closing time. There were people prostrate on chairs, dripping blood, shouting, arguing and vomiting. The nurse on reception was being subjected to a constant barrage of abuse."

"By 2.30am she was in tears and saying she didn't take any more. She had been treating a man with lacerations and had had to apply a dressing, causing him some pain. This led him to

scream, disgusting and highly personal remarks."

"At this point the man fainted and his mother-in-law went mad. She started shouting for witnesses and was screaming that all the nurses did was 'chat and drink tea'. She triggered mayhem. Everyone was shouting and screaming. I expected a riot at any minute."

"I went to help the man but as I bent over him he started screaming again. His mother-in-law came over, grabbed hold of my wrist and threatened to kill me if I didn't leave him alone."

"Then around 5am a 30-year-old man was brought in. He was extremely drunk and we put him into a cubicle to be examined. Within minutes he was out and shouting and then ran back in and was stood on the bed rattling the sides."

"I was worried he was going to lose his balance, so tried to calm him by putting my hand on his back. He turned his head and stared at me and then threw himself at me."

"I fell crashing back onto the floor and he fell on top of me. I picked myself up and he tried to punch me in the

face, instead hitting another nurse across the back of the head. The police came and arrested him for 'being drunk and disorderly' but when I tried to make a complaint the policewoman told me it wasn't worth the paper it was written on."

"I drove home the 15 miles that morning and cried all the way. I just had soft tissue injuries and bruising but it could have been a lot worse."

"Since then I have been threatened on two occasions with physical violence. I've been called every obscenity and expletive possible. We are just trying to do our job, helping people, but we are a vulnerable target."

The conference, organised by the Royal College of Nursing, was told that recorded incidents of violence against nursing staff had tripled in the past four years and, three-quarters of the victims now felt afraid at work."

Mark Jenkins, registrar at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast, who organised a national survey, said doctors, consultants and nurses had called for increased security in hospitals and more co-operation from police, who often chose to ignore incidents in casualty.

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An outburst by the President after an overdose death has prompted soul-searching among style gurus

Britain's fashion elite rejects blame for 'heroin chic'

By GRACE BRADBERRY, STYLE EDITOR

THE gurus of British fashion responded yesterday to an attack by President Clinton on "heroin chic" by saying that shots of hollow-eyed, wasted young models had had their day. They also denied promoting drug culture.

The President had accused the American fashion industry of glorifying drug addiction by using such images in major advertising campaigns. The "heroin chic" look originated in British magazines such as *i-D* and *The Face* in the early Nineties.

The President's speech was prompted by the death from a drug overdose of Davide Sorrenti, a 20-year-old fashion photographer, who specialised in pictures of emaciated models slumped in bathrooms. Sorrenti's mother, Francesca, herself a well-known photographer, last month sent an open letter to magazine editors and advertisers in America and Europe, saying: "Heroin chic isn't what we are projecting, it's what we are. Our business has become heroin chic."

Critics in America point to the high-profile advertising campaigns of Calvin Klein, which feature pale, androgynous models.

But Mrs Sorrenti pointed the finger at London for

promoting the look. "I think London has a much bigger problem with heroin than New York," she recently told *The Sunday Times*. "And I think all this London is hip thing has made that scene very influential."

But British fashion editors and photographers deny that they ever produce photographs that could be construed as "heroin chic". They acknowledge that a realistic style dominated magazines at the start of the Nineties but insist it had nothing to do with drugs.

Yesterday Edward Enninful, the fashion editor of *i-D*, said: "The funny thing for me is that this whole thing happened in the early Nineties — people here are going back to beauty."

Jefferson Hack, the editor of *Dazed and Confused*, agreed: "Once President Clinton has picked up on it you can be sure fashion has moved on from that."

"I think his reaction was against American magazines. British fashion photographers were dealing with real people and real situations but it had nothing to do with heroin."

British photographers such as Corinne Day pioneered the bare-faced wall look at the start of the Nineties. Their

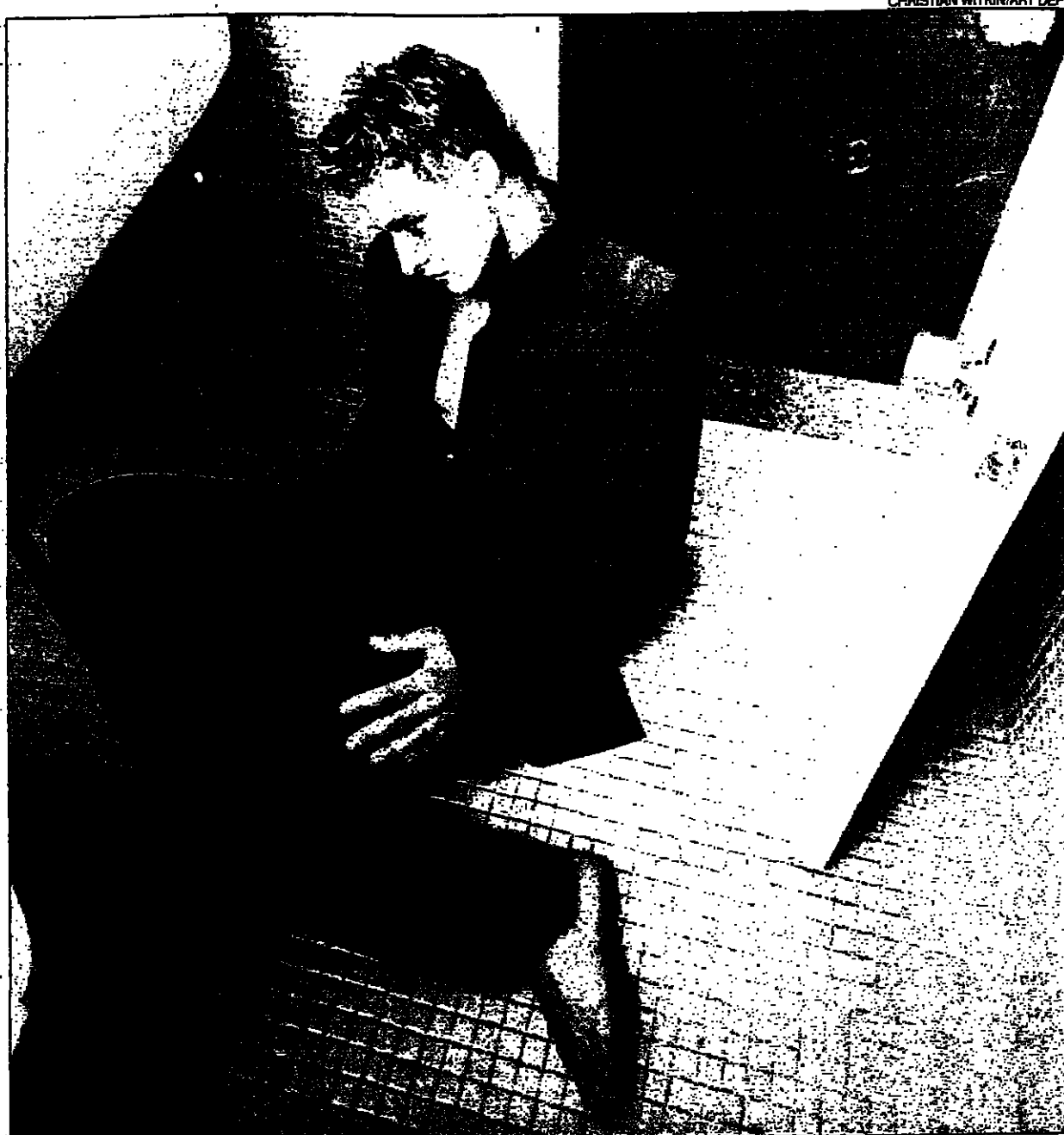
work inspired photographers and advertising directors worldwide.

Through a spokeswoman, Day said: "My photography is a pure image of a model, usually a friend of mine, photographed without make-up or lighting, sometimes whilst blinking," she said. "If these images are interpreted in any other way I only hope it will bring the issue of drugs to the surface."

The suggestion of drug-taking became more graphic when American magazines added darkened eyes and pallid skin to the pictures in bathrooms. Editors argued that it provided an antidote to glossy perfection.

Despite sympathy for Mrs Sorrenti, British fashion insiders feel that the spotlight should be on America. A recent issue of *Detour* magazine featured photographs by Christian Witkin of a model lying on a bathroom floor, apparently drugged. The actress Juliette Lewis complained that it was a deliberate "junkie lay-out".

Fashion insiders yesterday said that rock music was the real culprit. But as one fashion journalist conceded: "Fashion photography takes a lot from rock'n'roll."



One of the shots by Christian Witkin, published in an American magazine, which critics claim glamorise drug abuse

Price of a high lower as imports flood in

By RICHARD FORD

A SHARP drop in price has established heroin as the most fashionable drug in Britain. A kilogram costs £16,000 against £32,000 for cocaine, which is losing popularity among the "smart" set.

Drug squad officers have been alarmed at the speed with which the price of heroin has dropped on the streets of London from £100 to £50 a gram — the average daily dose — as the drug has flooded in from Turkey during the past 12 months.

Scotland Yard believes that members of the Turkish community in north London are behind the burgeoning imports. Those involved have been legally resident in Britain for some years.

Detective Inspector Peter Scott said that heroin was now used by people from all social backgrounds. "We are talking about so many people who have got so many different needs and desires. Because it is more easily available it has become a more fashionable drug." Users generally started by smoking heroin but changed to injections when they became addicted, he said.

The conflict in the Balkans had made it much easier to smuggle heroin, Mr Scott added. It is often brought in along long-distance lorry routes: more than 470kg seized last year is believed to have arrived in this way.

Last month customs officers made their biggest seizure: the 250kg cache was kept in a warehouse at Hornsey, north London. Last year two officers on foot patrol discovered 25kg being carried in a holdall by a Turkish man on the Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham.

The number of drug trafficking offences detected in the capital last year rose 26 per cent to 3,785. Nearly 24,000 drug possession offences were detected and there were 27,224 seizures of drugs.

Clinton's homily on drugs offers American analysts a quick fix

FROM TUNIKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

YOU do not have to be an avuncular President to set an agenda in America, nor even a particularly moral one. Just being the President is enough.

Bill Clinton has spoken out this week on two of America's perennial obsessions — drugs and fashion — and, suddenly, nobody can talk

about anything else. "Heroin chic" has swept to the top of the nation's blather-boards as analysts, leaders, writers, politicians and fashion gurus scramble to respond to the presidential homily.

Mr Clinton accused the American fashion industry of making heroin seem "glamorous, sexy and cool", adding: "You do not need to glamorise addiction to sell clothes."

Mr Clinton continued, in a pas-

sage that should earn him a stack of brownie points: "American fashion has been an enormous source of creativity and beauty and art and, frankly, economic prosperity for the United States. We should all value and respect that."

"But the glorification of heroin is not creative, it's destructive. It's not beautiful, it's ugly. This is not about art, it's about life and death. And

glorifying death is not good for society."

The seeds of this outpouring can be found in an article in *The New York Times*, about the death of a photographer who did little else but picture drug-dazed models, which "gophers" had clipped to the Presidential bedtime reading file.

The problem, however, is that "heroin chic" has, to put it bluntly, gone right out of fashion in Ameri-

ca. "Happy" ads are now in, as is a wholesome, drug-free appearance. Designers now have little time for the emaciated, "syringe-jabber's look", and parents of young children across America are grateful for that. Critics attribute the demise of "heroin chic" to a simple factor: it had ceased to sell. Michael Gross, author of *Model: The Ugly Business of Beautiful Women*, said: "Fashion doesn't care what message it is

sending out as long as the message sells frocks. The point is not to addict them to heroin. The point is to addict them to clothing."

The consensus is that Mr Clinton has stated the obvious. "The glorification of heroin is a bad thing," Charles Grandee, associate editor of *Vogue*, said. "Who would disagree?"

But when the President says something, America listens. "Heroin chic" is bad. You'll hear that now?

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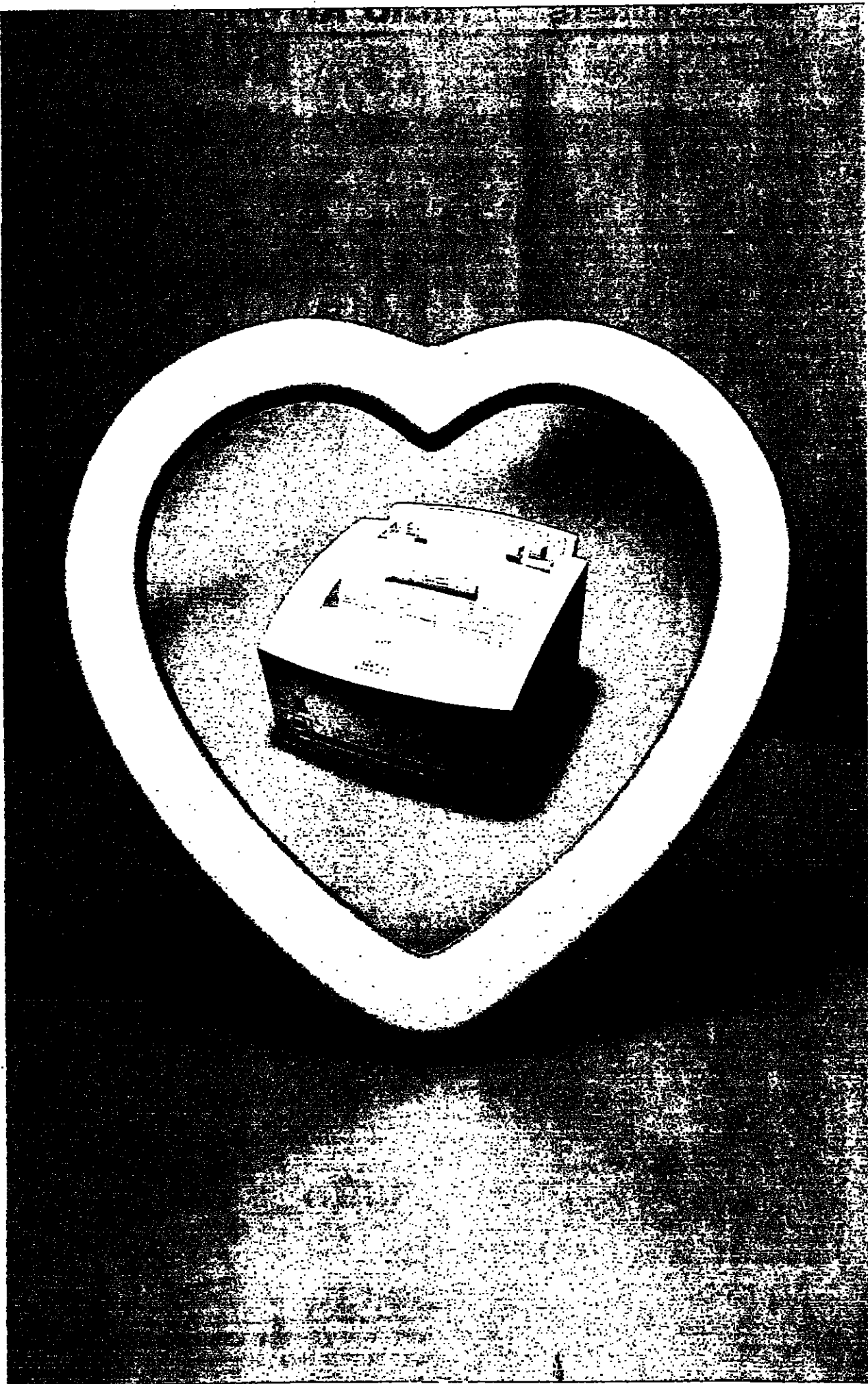
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Redwood joins attack on Major's record

Andrew Pierce sees the leadership contenders pick holes in the Tory party's disastrous election campaign

JOHN MAJOR'S leadership of the Conservatives became the focus of the campaign to succeed him yesterday when John Redwood became the second contender in 24 hours to criticise his record.

Mr Redwood said that the loyalties of party members had been stretched to breaking-point over the past few years because of the relentless abandonment of party principles. The former Cabinet minister expressed dismay that he had spent most of the general election campaign trying to dissuade paid-up members from staying at home or backing Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party.

"I should have been wooing the floating voter. I spent it instead with the party mem-

bership, who I pleaded with to vote for the Conservative candidate," he said.

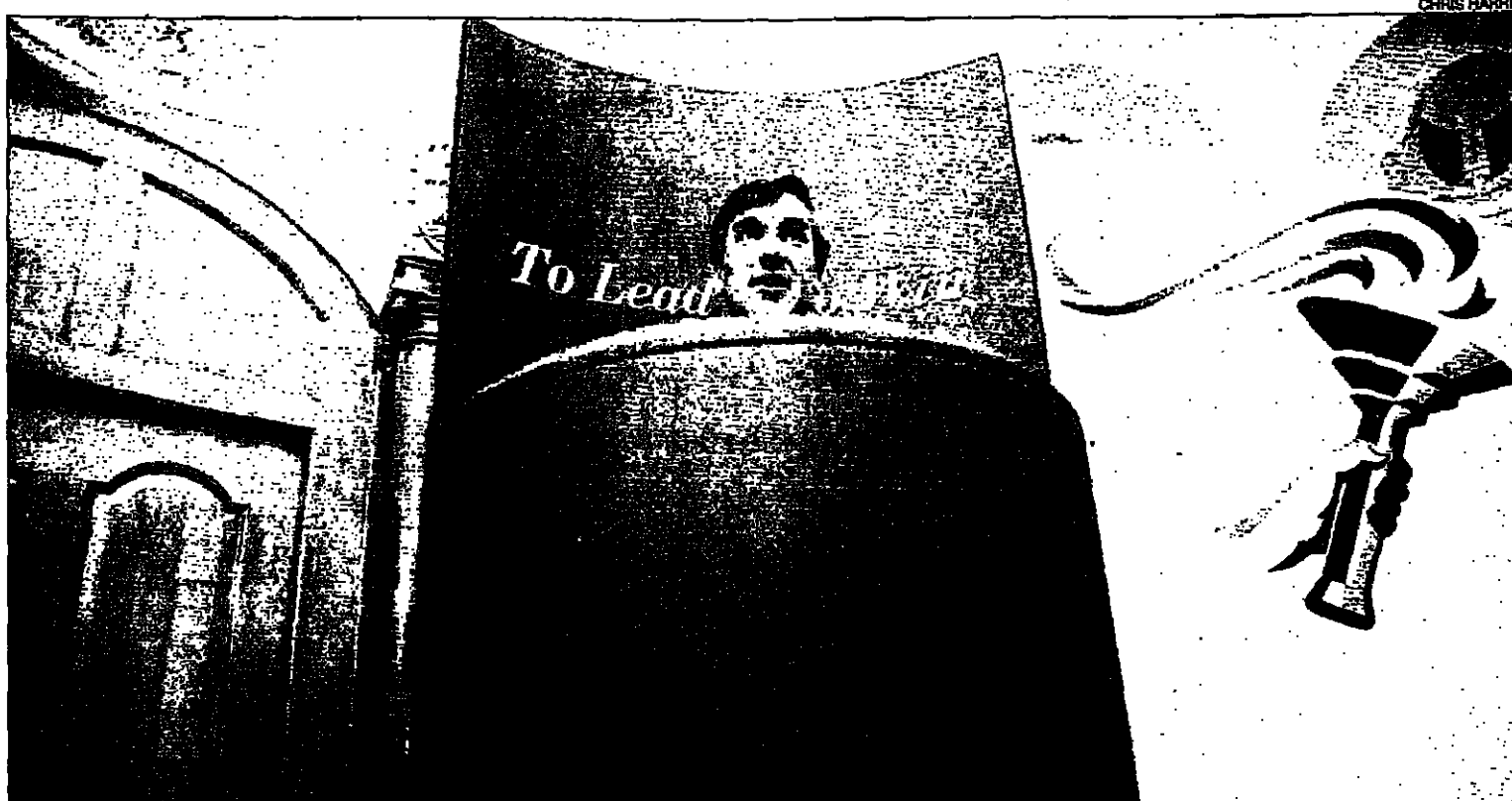
Mr Redwood was addressing a press conference from his new presidential-style set. He stood on a rostrum against a blue and white backdrop displaying the Tory torch and his campaign slogan: To Lead - To Win.

Mr Redwood's attack came the day after William Hague, seen as Mr Major's preferred heir apparent, criticised the "constantly shifting fudge" of recent years and condemned the era of "sleaze, greed, self-indulgence and division".

Mr Hague, youngest of the six candidates, will receive a further boost today from William Waldegrave, one of the seven Cabinet ministers who lost their seats. Mr Waldegrave will declare his support during a visit by Mr Hague to his former Bristol constituency.

Mr Redwood and Mr Hague both avoided mentioning Mr Major by name. But their comments were barely concealed criticisms of the way in which the party is divided over Europe.

Stephen Dorrell, the former health secretary, also entered the debate over Mr Major's record yesterday. In contrast to Mr Redwood and Mr Hague, he praised the former Prime Minister, who once



Leading man: John Redwood addresses a press conference yesterday from the set designed by a communications agency enlisted by his wife, Gail

singled out Mr Dorrell as a future Tory leader. "History will be very kind to John Major," he said in a statement. "Conservatives should be proud of our record over 1979 and 1997... I am proud to have been a member of the government during that time."

However, he went on to criticise the party's general election campaign. "In 1997 we lost contact with our support-

ers because we failed to convince them that a re-elected Conservative government would reflect their values."

Peter Lilley, speaking at a press conference, said that Mr Major carried out his leadership "with great dignity, and he emerged with respect of all members of the party".

Mr Redwood, who challenged Mr Major for the leadership in 1995, said that it was the drift over Europe, and

neglect of small businesses and traditional Tory concerns such as the erosion of the countryside, which had led to a sharp fall in membership.

"Some have quietly slipped away from the Conservatives, others have joined and worked for the Eurosceptic parties that formed on our flank. Towards the end of the last government, many party activists left the theatre. By the time the curtain came down we

were playing to an empty house."

Mr Redwood said that many former party members had agonised over whether to vote "at all in the general election. I want all those Conservatives to come back home," he said. "The way to invite them back is to remind them why we were all Conservatives in the first place."

Viscount Whitelaw, the closest confidant of Margaret

Thatcher during much of her premiership, yesterday called on the party to end internal "theological disputes" and to choose Kenneth Clarke, the former Chancellor. In a letter to *The Daily Telegraph*, Lord Whitelaw pointed out that the party did not move significantly to the Right after defeat in 1945 and 1966. "Instead, we listened to the message of the people and resisted ideological convulsions," he said.

Law chief tells youth courts to get tough

BY FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

MAGISTRATES were urged by the Lord Chancellor yesterday to be tough on persistent young offenders and to cut adjournments in youth courts.

In his first public pronouncement since taking office, Lord Irvine of Lairg, QC, told the 382 magistrates who chair the youth court panels in England and Wales that he wanted them to deal "swiftly and effectively" with young criminals. His letter was delivered the day after the Home Secretary announced measures to speed up the youth justice system, under the Crime and Disorder Bill.

Lord Irvine, president of the Magistrates' Association, said that speedy action was essential because delay disconnected the crime from the punishment.

He urged magistrates, where possible, to sentence more cases at first hearing; be more critical of applications for adjournment; consider carefully the period of adjournment and whether a pre-sentence report is necessary; and consider orders against lawyers for wasted costs.

Ann Fuller, chairman of the Magistrates' Association, said: "We are not against change but all magistrates wish to see a well-considered, practical and full review, not quick patchwork measures."



Hague: first contender to criticise leadership

Sniping suspect's brother-in-law seeks Dublin seat

BY AUDREY MAGEE, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE brother-in-law of the alleged IRA sniper charged with killing Lance Bombardier Stephen Restorick aims to become the first Sinn Féin member of the Dublin Parliament since 1922.

Caoimhghin O Caolain is standing in the border constituency of Cavan-Monaghan for its final seat under the Irish election's proportional representation system. His opponents admit that it will be a close fight.

Sinn Féin hopes that its success in securing two seats at Westminster will generate enough support in the Republic to carry Mr O Caolain into the Dail. The party is working hard to portray him as a community worker who has no paramilitary record. It is putting him forward for television interviews on party matters, sending him on missions to the United States and this week included him in the first talks with British government officials since the 1996 collapse of the IRA ceasefire.

The Times has discovered, however, that Mr O Caolain is closely linked to Bernard McGinn, who was arrested in Northern Ireland last month and charged with three murders: Lance Bombardier Restorick at a checkpoint in Bessbrook, Co Armagh last February; Lance Bombardier

Andrew Garret in 1993; and Gilbert Johnston, a former UDR soldier, in 1978. Mr O Caolain, 43, a former bank clerk, said that he had no wish to discuss his brother-in-law or their relationship.

"What happened to Bernard is not a factor in this election," he said. "People in this constituency know me and know of my commitment to peace."

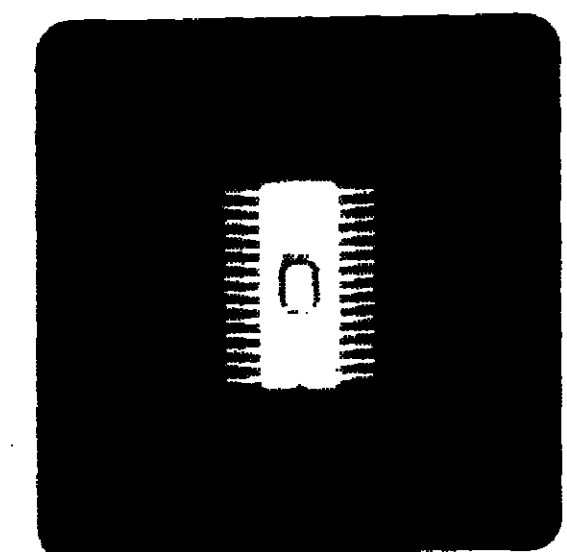
The Sinn Féin candidate — one of 15 standing in the election on June 6 — is running a close race against two young women, Ann Leonard of Fianna Fail and Ann Gallagher of Labour. They are fighting for the seat held by Ms Leonard's father, Jimmy, who is retiring from Irish politics. Mr Leonard received strong support from republicans in Monaghan and it is expected that those votes will transfer to Mr O Caolain rather than to his daughter, a 28-year-old nurse.

The Most Rev Desmond Connell, the Archbishop of Dublin, called for a referendum to confirm Ireland's legal ban on abortion. He said in a newspaper article that "unacceptable ambiguity" surrounded the legal right to life. John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, said that he and his coalition partners would not accede to the request.

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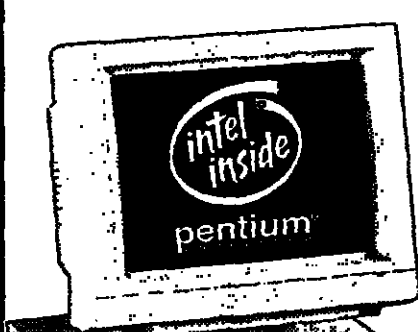


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مكتبة الامانة

Fox-hunters urged to set up own regulator

By MICHAEL HORNSEY, COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

THE establishment of an independent body to police hunting with hounds was recommended yesterday in the first review of the sport in nearly half a century. The proposed regulator would have the power to ban hunts that behaved unacceptably.

The review finds no reason to outlaw hunting, a move which would have a huge impact on rural social and economic life, but says there are "questionable" practices that should be examined and perhaps abandoned.

With the Government pledged to hold a free vote on whether hunting should be outlawed, the report will be widely seen as an attempt by the hunting community to put its own house in order in the hope of staving off a ban.

The authors find no scientific evidence that hunting foxes constitutes cruelty, but suggest that hunting cub foxes early in the season and using terriers to dig out foxes that have gone to ground may cause unusual mental and psychological stress.

The review was commissioned by the Countryside Movement, a body which was set up two years ago under the chairmanship of Sir David Steel, the former Liberal Democrat leader. Earlier this year it joined forces with the British Field Sports Society after running into financial straits.

a three-man team chaired by Richard Phelps, a retired public administrator. The two other members were William "Twink" Allen, Professor of Equine Reproduction at Cambridge University, and Stuart Harrop, Professor of Wildlife Management Law at Kent University. Professor Allen was the only member of the team who hunts.

The League Against Cruel Sports denounced the report, saying no one should be fooled into thinking it was the product of an unbiased inquiry. "It was the brainchild of the bloodsports lobby and funded by the bloodsports lobby," a statement said.

John Cooper, the league's chairman, added: "We would

obviously welcome the removal of cub-hunting and terrier-work from fox-hunting, although that is unlikely to be acceptable to many hunters."

"But it would still leave a so-called sport which torments foxes by chasing them to the point of exhaustion before allowing the animal to be disembowelled in the most horrendous fashion."

Mr Phelps insisted yesterday that his group had taken an entirely independent view. Their aim had been to take a dispassionate look at the arguments for and against hunting, a "far more complex" issue than was generally recognised.

Professor Harrop said the last big review of hunting, the

1951 Scott Henderson report, had recommended setting up a regulatory body but the proposal was not acted on.

"We are not suggesting that hunters are breaking their own rules," he said. "But they are not responsible to any outside body and there is no real pressure on them at present to examine their own practices."

The report suggests that the regulatory body should be modelled on the Press Complaints Commission. Ideally, hunts would enter into contractual relationships with the commission and agree to accept its rulings. If this could not be achieved, the body would need some basis in statute law.

On the alleged cruelty of fox-hunting, the report says: "Without doubt, the fox experiences a mixture of excitement, tension, fear and physical stress, and a final brief period of acute distress, before it is killed almost instantaneously by the lead hound which breaks its neck."

"But the levels of these disturbances are no greater or more prolonged than those that occur routinely in nature when any type of predator stalks, hunts and kills its prey." The fox was well equipped for the chase.

The report also says that a ban on hunting would have a severe effect on local economies, with associated hotel and catering trades affected.



Fox-hunting, here depicted by Stubbs, has an important role in rural life with many jobs dependent, the report says



Tories must stop dithering and start rebuilding party

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

The manoeuvrings over the Tory leadership are receiving far more attention than they deserve.

The contenders are being treated as if they still exercised serious power — partly because they are familiar faces. They do not, and will not for some time. The Tories can only shout from the sidelines. But much of the political world has not yet really adjusted to the scale of the Tory defeat, even though the party's new MPs are more realistic about the state of the party than their elders.

It was absurd that the elections for the chairman and executive of the Tory backbench 1922 committee were discussed as if this august body of old buffers (a mere couple of members excepted) really mattered. It is far less important than any one of half a dozen Cabinet committees. Sir Archie Hamilton looks the very model of a 1992 chairman, but he would not feature on any list of the 50 most influential politicians in Britain. At least, though, he and his

committee yesterday cut through all the recent blather about the leadership election. There has been endless talk about changing the rules to create an electoral college in which constituency chairmen and party worthies have a minority share of the vote or, alternatively, for a new leader to submit himself to broader approval by the party in the country. Of course, 164 MPs are far too few to elect the leader of what is supposed to be the alternative government. Most MPs were selected, or endorsed, by more party members in their own constituencies. But it is daft to devise a fancy, new franchise at this stage for the current election. The only sensible course is, as agreed last night, to hold the election under the existing rules and then to review the rules afterwards. There is a strong case for the involvement of ordinary party members, but as part of a broader scheme

to revive and rebuild the Tory party in the country. But last night's solution for the current contest still looks a messy compromise as the voluntary side of the Tory party appears discontented.

The choice of Tory leader is itself less important than the rival campaigns pretend. We are not necessarily talking about the next Prime Minister. Of course, some of the candidates would be worse than others, further isolating the party from the mainstream. Kenneth Clarke is the obvious candidate with a broad national appeal in the short term. But whoever is elected will find that the state of the Tory party is likely to get a lot worse in the immediate future. There will be questions about who will serve under whom and over the party's stand on Europe.

The immediate priorities for the Tories are not at Westminster or about policy-making but outside and organisational. The Tories

need to reinvent themselves as a new party just as Labour has under Tony Blair. The fresh faces, both male and female, on the Labour benches show a party which has a broad national base. At present, the Tories in the House of Commons are, in the main, "an English rural and suburban party", as Sir Patrick Cormack commented in the Commons on Wednesday. They no longer speak for big city and industrial England, or the whole of Scotland and Wales.

Consequently, the parliamentary party can no longer expect the predominant role it has enjoyed in the past. The Tories must look to a strong national organisation, a central membership scheme (both as a means of communication and fundraising) and to a revival in local government. The current frolics in the parliamentary party are merely a messy prelude to the real work of recovery.

PETER RIDDELL

Labour is seeking to prevent Bill on hunting

By JILL SHERMAN

THE Government was making strenuous efforts last night to prevent one of its MPs from introducing a Private Member's Bill to ban fox hunting.

Michael Foster, MP for Worcester, drew first place in the private members' ballot, which means that his Bill will be introduced this session and, if it commands widespread support, could have a good chance of becoming law.

As soon as the results were announced Mr Foster was called in to see the whips, warned that a ban on fox-hunting was not the Government's first priority and told not to rush ahead with any decision.

But Mr Foster, an animal rights sympathiser, is already being put under huge pressure from the anti-hunting lobby to use his slot for an anti-hunting Bill. Yesterday the League Against Cruel Sports said that it had had discussions on the issue with Mr Foster in the run-up to the election and it was willing to provide the resources necessary to bring in his Bill.

The League is proposing to pay for an opinion poll in Mr Foster's constituency. Yesterday it published a statement Mr Foster made to his local newspaper in which he said: "I would vote to ban fox-hunting. I think it is a barbaric practice." The League also said it had a piece of legislation ready which it had drawn up with other animal rights groups including the RSPCA.

Mr Foster said he had been trying to avoid the lobbyists because he had not decided what kind of Bill he would introduce. "I'm going to take time over the next week or so to make sure I judge the whole measure very carefully and don't rush into it."

Labour has promised a free vote on fox-hunting but business managers have pointed out to Mr Foster that the present session is already tightly packed with the Government's 26 bills and there would be little room for such a controversial Bill. They have warned him that although such a Bill would easily get through the Commons it might have a rougher passage in the Lords. A ban on fox-hunting is not a manifesto commitment.

Five of the top six MPs in the ballot were Tories. The name of Julian Lewis, new Tory MP for New Forest East, was second out of the hat. The Tory Eurosceptic Teresa Gorman was in third place, the former Transport Secretary Sir George Young fourth, Cynog Dafis of Haid Cymru fifth and John Burnett, the new Liberal Democrat MP for Devon West and Torridge, sixth.

Those in the top half dozen places have a good chance of getting a measure through Parliament if they opt for non-contentious legislation with widespread support.

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Regional companies to gain London home in Victorian building fitted with latest seating technology

Music hall takes encore as quick-change theatre

By DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

ONE of Britain's oldest music halls, which has been empty for decades since Charlie Chaplin, Gracie Fields and Tommy Cooper trod its boards, is to be restored as a theatre for the best regional companies.

Adrian Noble, artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, and Clive Anderson, the television host, are among leading figures promoting the 1862 Collins Music Hall on Islington Green, north London.

The RSC's Swan Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon and the Royal Exchange in Manchester will be among regional companies able to transfer productions there. The organisers, who say the Collins will be "an ambassador for the rapidly growing quality of British regional drama", are seeking £13.75 million from the National Lottery. The total cost is £17.95 million and most of the rest has been raised.

Sally Greene, the Collins's acting chairman, said that it would be "a new type of theatre" that could rearrange itself into virtually any stage layout. Using compressed air technology, interchangeable mobile seating towers would allow the theatre to be re-



The music hall's original facade after it was founded by Sam Collins, right, chimney sweep and comedian



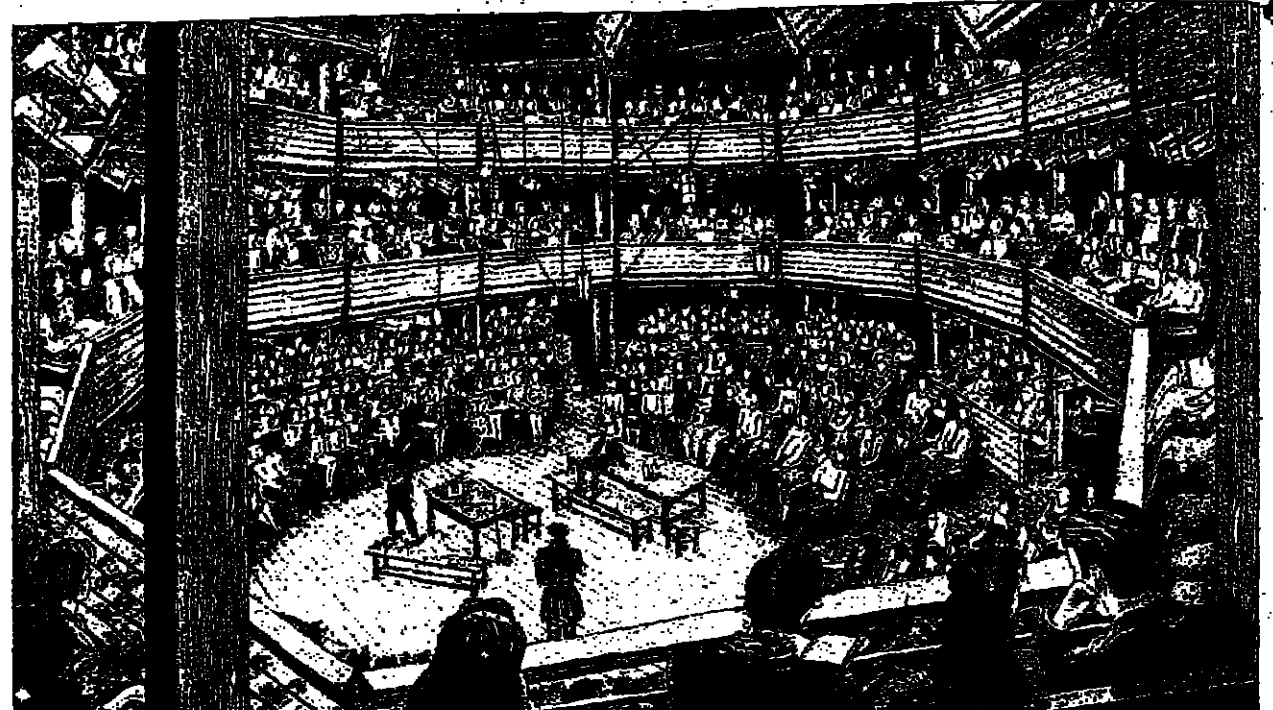
offer an exhibition area in the café-bar and a cinema for screening work by first-time film-makers. Charles Saatchi, the advertising innovator and collector of contemporary art, has promised to find artists for the gallery.

Mr Noble said: "If the lottery bid is successful, from 1999 more people will be able to see Swan Theatre productions in London than is currently possible." The Royal Exchange, which has been without a London home since its residency at the Round House in the early 1980s, will have a three-month season at the Collins.

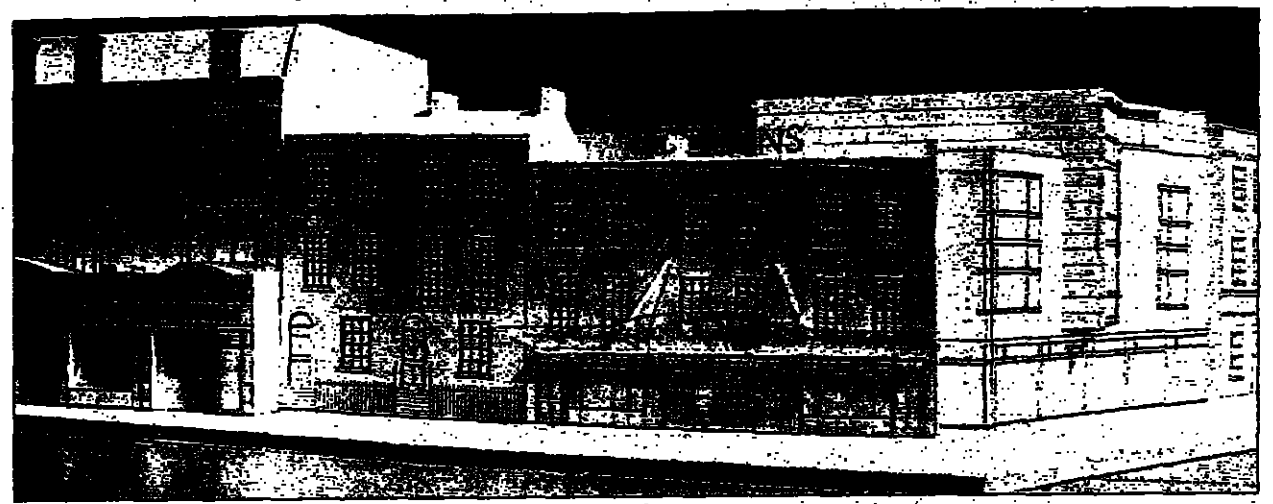
Yesterday the Exchange received £17 million lottery money to repair its Manchester home, which was badly damaged in last year's IRA bombing. More than £30 million is being spent on the Victorian building.

The hall will offer touring companies a more permanent London base. Max Stafford-Clark, artistic director of the innovative Out of Joint touring company, said: "Currently there are no theatres in London that can offer us what the Collins is proposing: an unconventional theatre space that will have the flexibility to respond to the varied range of work that we produce."

Theatre review, page 33



An artist's impression of the theatre's in-the-round mode and, below, a model of the exterior after restoration



Lottery money to pay for Cornish Garden of Eden

By MICHAEL HORNBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE Millennium Commission will today announce National Lottery funding to help create a "Garden of Eden" in a disused claypit near St Austell in Cornwall, much of it contained in what will be the biggest green-

The Eden Project will be one of the most ambitious schemes so far approved by the commission, the body set up to award grants from lottery proceeds to projects celebrating the millennium.

Sir Alcon Copsey, chairman of the project's trustees, said: "The core project will cost just over £73 million and we have applied for half of this to be met by the commission, though we will not know exactly how much we will get until the announcement is made."

A spokesman for the Millennium Commission confirmed yesterday that the award would be announced today

but refused to forecast the size of the grant.

Sir Alcon said: "The project is intended to symbolise the shift from exploitation to conservation of the natural world and will take about three years to construct. It is a very exciting design, a sort of cross between the international terminal at Waterloo Station and the conservatories at Kew Gardens."

"We hope to attract between 750,000 and one million visitors a year, injecting a lot of money into the local economy. Many foreign countries have already expressed interest in becoming involved in research once the project is complete."

At least three giant greenhouses, or "biomes", are envisaged at the old Bodva Quarry, spanning up to 125 metres each and rising to 65 metres. Each house will contain a different habitat: tropical rainforest, desert and Mediterranean.

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Afghan city enjoys its reprieve from Taleban conquest

FOR three days this week Mazar-i-Sharif closed its shutters and awaited invasion. Little by little it has emerged from panic, now convinced that the Taleban Islamic militia will take time to overthrow the last important city in Afghanistan beyond its control.

The markets were open and busy in Mazar-i-Sharif yesterday and popular Hindi film music pounded from record shops. Most women were fully veiled in keeping with custom, but some left their faces uncovered as they walked to and from work, the last women in Afghanistan allowed to hold jobs outside the home.

Many wore make-up and fashionable shoes, with no allahs to berate them or religious police to beat them. They looked at the latest goods in the shops, filled with clothes and cheap electronic goods bought in through the Central Asian states to the north. This last bastion of liberalism in Afghanistan is cherishing freedom, unsure how long it will last.

Christopher Thomas reports from Mazar-i-Sharif, the last significant urban refuge from the hardline Muslim regime

The local currency, in reality worthless, has soared and plunged this week in response to rumour, but has finally settled down to around its earlier value, a sign of confidence among the money traders; their ears constantly tuned to gossip.

They are crucial to the survival of the north. This gaggle of men, arms laden with cash, are the best barometer of the mood of Mazar-i-Sharif, and the latest exchange rates against the dollar suggest that they have no great fear of the immediate future, although they worry that they will fail to anticipate the north's collapse.

The war has moved close: there has been fighting within 30 miles of Sheberghan, a small town less than an hour's drive from Mazar-i-Sharif where General Abdul Rashid Dostum, the northern military chief, has his headquarters. But there are indications he has recaptured territory lost to him in a mutiny that threatened to bring down his relatively liberal Islamic fiefdom. He does not seem beaten yet.

The road to Sheberghan, closed for two days, reopened yesterday, as did the road to the strategically important town of Pul-i-Khumri, 100 miles to the southeast. This demonstrates confidence that no invasion can be imminent while inconclusive battles continue in the countryside, stretching the resources of General Dostum's personal and ideological enemies.



Refugees cling to a bus in their attempt to escape fighting on the "Taleban front line" north of Kabul yesterday

warfare: rather, it is opportunistic killing by wandering bands of guerrillas, and casualties are probably modest. At times it is probable that neither side knows who is winning.

General Dostum spent time on Tuesday with the head of the Iranian diplomatic mission in Mazar-i-Sharif, further proof of his closeness to Tehran, which has propped up his currency with American dollars when it has appeared to

be about to collapse. Iran has two principal interests in Afghanistan: protecting the Shia minority and ensuring that an oil pipeline is never built from Central Asia through Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Arabian Sea.

General Dostum may have recaptured all or some of Sar-e-Pol, one of three provinces he lost in the mutiny. General Abdul Malik, who is leading the revolt, has thrown in his lot with Taleban, but for how

long, and why, are not clear. He is a traitor in the eyes of many fellow Uzbeks and may not be able to sustain an effective challenge to his friend-turned-enemy, a popular leader whose name, Dostum, means "everybody's friend".

Islamabad: Mullah Muhammad Ghaus, Taleban Foreign Minister, held talks with Norbert Holl, the United Nations mediator, here yesterday. Afghan sources said. The talks focused on the food situation in Afghanistan, humanitarian assistance and military developments in northern Afghanistan. Abdul Wahab, a diplomat from the Taleban-controlled Afghan Embassy here said.

Other sources said Herr Holl proposed a meeting between Taleban and a representative of the opposition alliance which is headed by General Dostum. They said that the Taleban official's response was "positive". (AFP)

Grannies set up Tokyo escort agency

Myo: Life begins at 60 for women of the "Grandma" escort club that has just opened in Shinjuku, Tokyo's busiest entertainment quarter (Robert Whyman writes). What makes the Grandma unique is that the oldest woman on the books is 72, and none is under 60.

While similar establishments offer high-school students or enter to the lustrous national obsession with underage girls, Madame Mizuki's clients include a mature, preferably silver-haired companion, or that special date.

"People might think there's no demand for elderly ladies," says the enterprising Madame Mizuki. "But the fact is the telephone is ringing off the book."

Israel press corps urges Arafat to free journalist

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ISRAEL'S 200-member Foreign Press Association yesterday appealed to Yasser Arafat, the President of the Palestinian Authority, to release a leading Palestinian-American journalist from prison where he is being held in an attempt to stifle internal criticism of the self-rule administration.

Daoud Kuttab, renowned for his attacks on Israeli military rule of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, is reported to be detained in Ramallah jail because his private television station pioneered broadcasting live debates from the 88-member Palestinian Legislative Council. This body, better known as the Palestinian parliament, is often critical of Mr

Arafat's administration, despite his efforts to reduce its influence, and it recently tried to pass a motion of no confidence in the authority.

Mr Kuttab's arrest was the most serious example of attempts by the Palestinian self-rule leadership to silence the press. His detention came as criticism was growing among Palestinians of corruption among Mr Arafat and his supporters, some of whom have built themselves multi-million-dollar villas in Gaza.

Mr Kuttab's brother, Jonathan, a prominent lawyer, said the journalist was arrested on Tuesday night. "They [Palestinian Authority officials] do not like the fact

that people speak bluntly in the council. They do not like the fact he goes live," the lawyer said, adding that his brother would not be freed until Mr Arafat returns from talks in Cairo.

The statement from the press association said: "The FPA urges prompt action to release journalist Daoud Kuttab. As far as we understand, no charges have been brought against him and it is widely understood he was detained for broadcasting stories from the Palestinian Legislative Council. If true, such action would be a serious and grave restraint on free expression, inconsistent with free journalism."

Koreans fled rumours of war

FROM REUTER IN SEOUL

THE first "boat people" defectors from North Korea, who arrived in the South last week, yesterday described people starving to death and said their homeland was gripped by rumours of impending war against South Korea.

Fourteen members of two families told their first news conference that life in the North was a constant battle to survive. "My parents had malnutrition from eating only flour porridge," said Kim Hwa Ok, 41, the wife of the vessel's captain.

The other family included the ship's engineer, Kim Won Hyung, who said rumours were spreading that the North

Korean leader, Kim Jong Il, would launch an attack on the South between July and October at the end of a three-year mourning period for his father, the late Kim Il Sung.

A spokesman for North Korea's Foreign Ministry said yesterday that the food crisis had reached a "serious stage" but it would not go to war to resolve it.

Korean leader, Kim Jong Il, would launch an attack on the South between July and October at the end of a three-year mourning period for his father, the late Kim Il Sung.

A spokesman for North Korea's Foreign Ministry said yesterday that the food crisis had reached a "serious stage" but it would not go to war to resolve it.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tirana sets date for poll

Vienna: Franz Vranitzky, the European envoy to Albania, said yesterday that all sides had agreed to go ahead with a general election on June 29.

Herr Vranitzky, mediating for the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, pledged that the international community would now do everything possible to help the country to prepare for the poll and for reconstruction. (Reuters)

Cyclone fears

Chittagong: Nearly 750 fishermen were reported missing, feared drowned, in the Bay of Bengal, three days after a 125 mph cyclone battered the Bangladesh coast killing around 100 people. (Reuters)

Il die in ambush

Guwahati: Tribal separatists ambushed and killed 11 soldiers as Inder Kumar Gujral, the Indian Prime Minister, toured a troubled hill region in the northeastern Manipur state. (Reuters)

Fatal flight cash

Detroit: A local man was awarded \$625,000 for the suffering his late mother endured in the 12 minutes after Korean Air Lines Flight 007 was shot down in Soviet airspace, in 1983 before it crashed. (AP)

Boycott threat

Jakarta: Megawati Sukarnoputri, the leader of Indonesia's pro-democracy movement, threw down a challenge to President Suharto by threatening to organise a boycott of the election on May 29.

Killer quake

Kosambhat: At least 35 people were killed and 1,000 injured when a powerful earthquake hit Madhya Pradesh in central India, flattening houses and burying many victims as they slept. (Reuters)

Editor cleared

Lusaka: Fred M'membe, the Editor of The Post, an independent Zambian newspaper, and his two deputies were acquitted on treason charges for publishing leaked government secrets last year. (AP)

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Switzerland	FF	1390	675	338	228	328
Rest of Europe	£	424	212	106	71.6	106

Albanian slaughter threatens lake's ancient fish delicacy

FROM TOM WALKER IN OHRID

EUROPEAN royals, Roman emperors and Eastern sultans have gorged themselves on its succulent pink flesh through the ages, but the present has little respect for the unique Ohrid trout of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, now facing extinction.

After more than three million years in the mountain fastness of Lake Ohrid, *Salmo letnica* (said to have been Queen Victoria's favourite fish), finds itself in a conservationist's nightmare. Half the lake lies in Macedonia, where the fish is almost a national symbol; the other is in Albania, where the salmon-like trout is being electrocuted and harpooned into oblivion.

"Numbers have halved in the last five years and it is now getting critical," said Stefan Kanev, whose family has fished for generations from the Macedonian village of Kaneo. "They never used to eat it much in Albania, but now they are all fishing because they are all hungry."

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US Air Force chief brands B52 pilot 'insubordinate liar'

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE US Air Force's Chief of Staff branded America's first female B52 pilot an insubordinate liar as his political superiors yesterday wrestled to find a solution in the adultery case of Lieutenant Kelly Flinn.

Fast becoming a cause celebre, Lieutenant Flinn has been accused of adultery with a civilian and was to have been court-martialled at Minut air force base in North Dakota this week.

Amid growing complaints on Capitol Hill over her treatment and demands from critics that she not be granted the honourable discharge she requested, Sheila Widnall, the Air Force Secretary, was last night struggling to bring an end to what has become a highly embarrassing soap opera for the Pentagon.

But while Trent Lott, the Republican Senate majority leader, and Democrats in Congress accused the air force of poor management, its leading officer harshly criticised Lieutenant Flinn, 26, during testimony on Capitol Hill. General Ronald Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff, said the public should not merely

Less than a week after we arrived, Lieutenant Flinn was in bed with my husband?

view the bomber pilot as an adulteress.

"The adultery thing ... that's the thing that has been spun up in the press. That's not what the air force is interested in," the general said. "In the end, this is not an issue of adultery. This is an issue about an officer entrusted to fly nuclear weapons who disobeyed an order, who lied."

The most serious allegation against Lieutenant Flinn is that she made a false official statement to investigators, a charge which carries a maximum penalty of five years' prison.

She is also charged with disobeying air force regulations against fraternisation with an enlisted man, as well as adultery with a married

civilian and conduct unbecoming an officer, which could lead to a total sentence of four years. The lieutenant could be sentenced to a further six months for disobeying an order.

Politicians argued that in several cases, including the infamous 1991 Tailhook affair, in which female pilots were sexually abused by airmen at a Las Vegas convention, there had never been any prosecution by the air force.

But General Fogleman, a highly decorated Vietnam-era fighter pilot, argued that the service could not selectively enforce its rules in the case of Lieutenant Flinn.

Mrs Widnall has also received a letter from Airman Gayla Zigo, whose civilian husband had the affair with the B52 pilot. The letter called for no mercy in the case and portrayed Lieutenant Flinn as a sexual predator who deliberately tried to steal her husband.

"I thought she was simply being a friend to my husband, not trying to break up my marriage," said Airman Zigo. "Less than a week after we arrived to the base, Lieutenant Flinn was in bed with my husband having sex."

She added: "If Lieutenant Flinn gets away with these crimes, what does that say to the rest of the air force populace?"

Frank Spinner, Lieutenant Flinn's lawyer, said the letter showed flawed judgement. He said Airman Zigo, a battered wife who subsequently divorced her husband, Marc, should direct her anger at him.

The military judge in the case has indicated that, if Mrs Widnall rejected the honourable discharge, he would be prepared to begin the court martial soon afterwards.



Kelly Flinn, left, the B52 pilot accused of adultery, and Sheila Widnall, the Air Force Secretary



Police fire teargas and rubber bullets at demonstrators in Libertador San Martín in the northern Argentine province of Jujuy. More than 50 people were injured in a second consecutive day of clashes involving sugar workers, who were protesting over layoffs and pay arrears.

McVeigh trial witnesses sow doubts over date bomb truck was rented

By TOM RHODES

AFTER weeks of damaging evidence against Timothy McVeigh, the chief suspect in the Oklahoma City bombing, the prosecution claimed that Mr McVeigh, under the pseudonym "Robert Kling", rented the truck a day later.

The decorated former Gulf War veteran stayed at the motel under his own name in the week before the blast. Les McGown, mother of the motel's manager, was expected to testify that she saw Mr McVeigh in the vehicle on Easter Sunday, the day before

he is alleged to have rented the truck. While the prosecution crammed 137 witnesses into 18 days of compelling physical and circumstantial evidence against Mr McVeigh, they failed to find a single person who would say they had seen the ex-soldier alone in Oklahoma City on the day of the bombing. Stephen Jones, the leading defence lawyer, was already focusing on this element last night as he was expected to call Dana Bradley, a teenager who lost her leg in the blast.

Ms Bradley was to testify that she saw the Ryder lorry arrive outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City shortly before 9am. In contrast to the lanky, pale-faced Mr McVeigh, she has said the driver was short and dark-skinned.

Mr Jones hopes to inject reasonable doubt into the equation by showing Mr McVeigh was the stooge of a wider plot involving elements from the Middle East and even the IRA. He will also criticise the methods of the FBI forensic laboratory.

Sanctions on Chinese companies

By TOM RHODES

WASHINGTON yesterday moved to punish a Hong Kong company and two Chinese firms suspected of providing Iran with chemical weapons technology.

In what was seen as a deliberate effort to rebut criticism that President Clinton had softened his attitude of Chinese human rights, trade and arms abuses, the Administration announced its first sanctions against Chinese companies since re-election last year.

Madeleine Albright, the American Secretary of State, told the Senate that America would implement a trade embargo against the unnamed companies for at least a year. She said that there was no direct evidence of any involvement by the Chinese Government.

Senator Robert Bennett, Utah Republican, also pressed Ms Albright on naval intelligence which suggested China was arming Iran with land-based cruise missiles that could attack American vessels in the Gulf.

Without confirming the intelligence reports, Ms Albright said the State Department had expressed its concerns over the issue to the Beijing Government.

Clinton appoints policy seminar guru as envoy to London

By OUR WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

PHILIP LADER, a close friend of the Clintons and Sir James Goldsmith, is to be named America's new Ambassador to London.

After months of speculation, US officials said yesterday that, barring any last-minute hitches or problems with confirmation, Mr Lader, 51, was certain to become President Clinton's new envoy to the Court of St James.

A former White House deputy Chief of Staff and head of the Small Business Administration, Mr Lader is also founder of the Renaissance Weekend seminars at Hilton Head in

South Carolina, the annual new year policy discussion groups faithfully attended by the Clintons since 1984.

The posting to Britain will be something of a homecoming for Mr Lader, who studied law at Oxford before moving to Harvard. A confirmed Anglophile, he later became a lawyer and prominent businessman instrumental in developing Hilton Head Island as a world-class resort.

Sir James appointed him vice-president of his American holding company, running a four-million-acre property portfolio, the largest in the United States.

He is viewed as a member of the President's inner circle, a "Friend of

Bill", who first met the future American leader during Mr Clinton's first term as Arkansas Governor in 1978.

The two have remained in constant contact ever since. In 1986, when Mr Lader ran unsuccessfully for the governorship of South Carolina, Mr Clinton spent an entire evening reminding his protégé that he had also been defeated on first running for office.

Apart from this single failure, Mr Lader's career has been marked by his ability to turn around ailing businesses and institutions. In 1991, he was appointed president of Bond University in Queensland, Australia.

a foundation on the verge of bankruptcy. When he left two years later to join the Clinton Administration, the university was starting to make a profit and its enrolment had risen by a third.

While his appointment to London was described as a "priority" by White House officials yesterday, it was uncertain when an official announcement would be made.

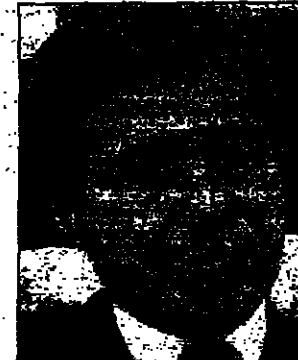
The President, who travels to Europe next week for meetings in Paris and The Hague, is spending six hours in London on his return for a meeting with Tony Blair.

If confirmed, Mr Lader and his wife, Linda, are expected to continue

running the annual Renaissance gatherings.

Mr Clinton this week named John Kornblum, the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, as his new Ambassador to Bonn. Soon he is expected to name Felix Rohatyn, the Wall Street banker, as his envoy to Paris and Tom Foley, the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, is said to be destined for Tokyo.

□ Stockholm: Rolf Ekeus, who has led the United Nations' tense and complex Iraqi weapons inspection programme, has been appointed as Sweden's Ambassador to the United States. Mr Ekeus replaces Henrik Liljegen. (AP)



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China hopes Blair will put aside disputes to attend Hong Kong ceremony

PUTTING past quarrels with Britain over Hong Kong behind them, senior Chinese officials yesterday expressed the hope that Tony Blair would attend the ceremonies to "commemorate and celebrate" the handover of Hong Kong on June 30.

"Of course, we wish to see a very friendly atmosphere prevailing," said one senior official. Expressing a personal view, he added: "I hope the people from your side are of the highest standing, and the higher position they are the better."

The official said that President Jiang Zemin of China would be present. The Queen would be represented by the Prince of Wales, but, the official said, if the Prime Minister could be there, "that would be appropriate."

Mr Blair is expected to weigh up whether he will be able to fit the trip into his busy domestic agenda. "I think the Prime Minister has not reached a final decision," said one source familiar with the British position. "A lot will depend on who is going on the Chinese side and we don't have definite word yet."

British and Chinese officials are putting the finishing touches to preparations for the colony's handover in June, report James Pringle in Beijing and Michael Dynes in London

Foreign Office said yesterday that Mr Blair "is expected to decide soon" whether he will attend the handover ceremonies and Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, has already said that he will be there.

Although the political reforms pushed through by Chris Patten, the Governor of Hong Kong, have profoundly angered the Chinese, he will be treated cordially at the ceremonies. "Of course I would be ready to shake hands with him," said one official who is in London for final consultations.

Detailed discussions have been going on for months between Britain and China in the Joint Liaison Group (JLIG). It is responsible for making the transfer arrangements and is finalising "finishing touches" such as guest lists and seating arrangements. The group's two ambassadors, Hugh Davies and Chen Zuofei, have been meeting once a week.

The last JLIG plenary session will be held in Hong Kong from next Wednesday until Friday. It will decide the final details, including whether Mr Jiang will be present before or after midnight on June 30, and whether it will be a Communist-style ceremony with leaders lined up on the platform, as the Chinese want, or the less formal arrangement favoured by London.

There will be "no protocol problems" between the two sides, diplomatic sources say, although Mr Jiang, as China's head of state, will be the most senior person present.

The Chinese perceive Mr Blair and Mr Cook as "more friendly" than Mr Patten and the Conservative Government that appointed him, Chinese sources say.

Foreign diplomats in Beijing said yesterday that the presence of the Prime Minister would illustrate Britain's continuing concern for the territory, which it has ruled for 150 years.

"At the same time, it would allow Mr Blair to take the measure of Chinese leaders, and have useful talks with them on future Sino-British relations, and possibly trade," one envoy said.

In Tiananmen Square yesterday, the digital clock marking off the days, minutes and seconds until Hong Kong's return, had reached 39 days before zero hour.

Three ancient veterans of the Chinese Communist Party's revolutionary struggles in the 1930s, wearing campaign medals and new uniforms in the style of that time, posed beneath the clock as a choir of Beijing senior citizens sang "Without the Communist Party there would be no New China".

Officials say that at midnight on June 30 fireworks, banned in China in recent years, will be set off over Tiananmen Square. It is uncertain, however, if ordinary citizens will be permitted to attend.

Chinese officials are beginning to talk about the handover as "a great event" and "an historic occasion". Although films are being screened on the Opium Wars and other events involving Britain's relationship with China, anti-British feeling is hard to detect. There does, however, seem an atmosphere of quiet satisfaction that this problem "left over from history" will soon be settled.

Judge claims KGB role in attack on Pope 'covered up'

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE Italian judge who led the initial investigations into the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II in May 1981 broke his long silence on the case yesterday. He said that he was convinced the KGB had organised the conspiracy, but its role had been covered up "because it was inconvenient to the highest authorities in the West at a delicate moment in East-West relations".

Ferdinando Imposimato was the investigating magistrate in charge of the inquiry after the attempted murder of the Pope by Mehmet Ali Agca, a Turkish gunman connected to the right-wing Grey Wolves terrorist group, in St Peter's Square. He said he was taken off the case in 1985 "just as we were coming to a conclusion over the KGB and the Bulgarian connection".

The "Bulgarian link" has been the subject of repeated controversy since 1981, but never proved. The Pope has said he does not believe that Sofia was involved.

However, Judge Imposimato, who served later as an MP for the Party of the Democratic Left (PDS), the former Communist Party, and is now an appeal court judge, told *Corriere della Sera* that he had continued to take an interest in the case.

The documents he had seen between 1981 and 1985 and since then left no doubt that "the Kremlins", specifically Yuri Andropov, then head of the KGB and later Soviet leader, had wanted the Pope dead because he posed a threat to the Communist system not only in his native Poland but also throughout the Soviet bloc.

But that view became "inconvenient" by 1985, at a time when Mikhail Gorbachev was coming to power in Moscow with a reform programme that might, and eventually did, lead to the transformation and collapse of the Soviet Union. "The West did not need any criminalisation of the East... It was easier to blame the attack on an alleged madman. But he had found Agca, who is still in prison, perfectly lucid and intelligent."

Judge Imposimato said that his superiors had urged him repeatedly to "let it go". But he had decided to speak out after Oral Cakir, a Turkish former member of the Grey Wolves living in Paris, had said recently that he, too, had been in the square with Agca and had also fired at the Pope.

"I can confirm that Cakir was indeed there, although the bullets fired at the Pope were Agca's," the judge said. "More than that, there were two Bulgarian diplomats close by with a getaway car: Ivan Donchev, who was listed as cultural attaché, and Stoli Kolev, also known as Theodor Ayvazov." The subsequent acquittal by a Rome court of Bulgarian officials accused of involvement in the assassination attempt was "politically inspired".

The judge said that he could also shed light on the disappearance of Emanuela Orlandi, 15, the daughter of a senior Vatican official, on June 22, 1981, five weeks after the attack. She was never found.

He said that, after a flimsy lesson at the Pontifical Conservatoire, she had been kidnapped by Turkish Grey Wolves linked to the KGB because they knew Agca was beginning to talk in captivity about the true extent of the conspiracy. He said the terrorists had offered to return the girl in exchange for Agca, who they intended to kill in order to silence him. But there had been no deal and Emanuela had eventually become "integrated" into an "Islamic community".

Agca had understood the threat posed to him by the kidnapping and had steadfastly maintained afterwards for public consumption that he had acted alone.

The judge added of the KGB-Agca connection: "You have no idea of the obstacles we encountered at international levels when we came to this conclusion, or the superficiality with which some key inquiries were conducted."



Annette Sorensen and her baby daughter, Liv, on their return to Copenhagen yesterday. The mother was given a conditional discharge after being accused of "endangering the welfare and physical wellbeing" of the girl

Bistro mother and baby go home

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

THE Danish single mother who was arrested in New York a fortnight ago, for leaving her 14-month-old daughter in a pram on the pavement outside a bistro while she drank margaritas with the father, flew back to Denmark with her child yesterday after being ordered by a New York court to leave the United States.

Annette Sorensen was given a conditional discharge by the city's family court and put on probation after the police had charged her with "endangering the welfare and physical wellbeing" of her daughter, Liv.

The girl's father, Xavier Wardlaw, a 49-year-old squatter and playwright, still faces charges, including an accusation of disorderly conduct. His trial has been set for June 4. Yesterday, Mr Wardlaw's lawyer called the charges against his client "outrageous", saying that the police had "ripped his baby out of her mother's arms" when they arrested the couple.

The case of "little Liv" captured New York's imagination, while at the same time igniting a great deal of outrage in Denmark. Danes believed that the police had over-reacted to an extraordinary degree when they arrested Ms Sorensen and Mr Wardlaw for leaving Liv on the pavement. The parents spent two nights in jail.

The child welfare agency in New York City put the baby in foster care for four days before she was reunited with her mother. Commentators in Denmark queued up to point out that prams are left outside all the time in Copenhagen, and that Ms Sorensen was only doing what came naturally to her at home.

New Yorkers, however, reacted incredulously to the Danish dismay. In a city where even the dustbins are chained to railings to foil thieves, leaving a baby outside a restaurant on a busy city street amounted for many to a severe dereliction of parental duty. As a commentator pointed out in the *New York Post*, "the corner of Second Avenue where the baby was left is about as kid-friendly as a shark-tank".

Certainly, "cultural factors" appear to have played an important role in the whole affair. Ms Sorensen was unrepentant to the end, sticking doggedly to her assertion that she "would leave Liv outside in Denmark". Yet the baby's father, who lives in Brooklyn, appears not to have counselled Ms Sorensen against such Danish practices in a city which, by universal agreement, is a trifle less safe than Copenhagen.

Hong Kong seeks to extradite soldier

FROM JONATHAN MURSKY IN HONG KONG

HONG KONG officials are attempting to extradite from the United Kingdom a British soldier suspected of murder. They hope to allay the fears of citizens that if he escapes trial in the colony, members of the future Chinese garrison who commit crimes here might also escape local laws.

"We are making every effort to get this man back," a spokesman for the British Forces here said yesterday. "We are aware of the enormous implications for after July 1."

On April 20 there was a fight outside the Pussy Cat Club in the Wanchai district. During the fight, Garry Tait, an Australian, was knocked unconscious. He died in hospital on April 29.

The suspect in the killing, Warrant Officer Barry Miller, a physical training instructor, returned to Britain on April 22 as part of the garrison's pre-handover withdrawal. The British Army insists it knew nothing about the case. Subsequently, a photograph of the suspect was circulated, and the British Forces spokesman said: "We reviewed the picture and told the police."

Several possible witnesses of the fight, also off-duty soldiers, who were due to return to Britain, have been kept in Hong Kong by the Army, but are carrying out normal duties. According to the spokesman, since Warrant Officer Miller was off-duty and is now in a different jurisdiction, the Army cannot order him back to Hong Kong. "He has all the rights of any other British citizen," the spokesman said.

Warrant Officer Miller has appeared twice at Bow Street Magistrate's Court and been bailed. Extradition papers will be presented in London on June 25 and, if he is sent back to Hong Kong, his trial is unlikely to occur before the handover to Chinese rule.



The Pope during a visit in Rome in 1983 to Mehmet Ali Agca, who had tried to murder him in 1981

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Europe may fine Boeing \$5bn over 'unfair' merger

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS



Van Miert adamant he will not back down

THE stage was set yesterday for a possible transatlantic trade battle after the European Commission set out its objections to a merger between the Boeing and McDonnell Douglas aircraft makers, and officials said that it could declare the deal illegal.

Karel Van Miert, the Competition Commissioner, was adamant that he would not back down in an offensive that eventually could lead to the EU imposing a fine of up to \$5 billion (£3 billion) on the US company if the merger conditions were not revised.

EU sources said. The deal, worth \$15 billion, appeared to break EU law because it would give Boeing the lion's share of a market where the only other player was Europe's Airbus Industrie, according to the Commission. Boeing would be providing 84 per cent of the worldwide airliner fleet, compared with 60 per cent now, it says.

The commissioner's campaign against the deal has stirred anger in America and threatens to cast a shadow over a Hague summit next Wednesday between President Clinton and EU leaders. Mr Van Miert's action has also stirred some concern inside the Commission, where officials are worried that his stance is troubling efforts to forge smoother relations with Washington.

Mr Van Miert's latest exercise of the Commission's powers to vet deals anywhere that affect EU business competition has already led to a run-in with British Airways over its planned alliance with American Airlines. However, the

seeds of a compromise that would end that dispute are emerging, the sources said.

Behind the row over Boeing is the American conviction that Mr Van Miert is acting to protect Airbus and overstepping his authority by interfering in a US business matter. The commissioner's EU officials are working in tandem with the US Federal Trade Commission, which is itself vetting the McDonnell Douglas takeover, but Brussels expects the American officials in Brussels yesterday deplored Mr Van Miert's public statements in a case still under review. Boeing's lawyers are said to be collecting every comment by Mr Van Miert for use in court if the affair is not settled.

The Americans say that the Boeing merger will have little impact on the market because McDonnell Douglas has only about 6 per cent of airliner sales and has sold no planes in

Europe for several years. Mr Van Miert's team cites a sheaf of figures to justify Europe's right to block the deal as it exists. Boeing would become the only plane-maker offering a full range of airliners and it would have all of the market for the biggest transports, it says. They are also worried about the commercial spill-over from the new company's huge production of military aircraft. McDonnell Douglas provides 56 per cent of fighter aircraft, they note.

The Commission is also upset by Boeing's recent contracts with American Airlines and Delta to act as their sole suppliers for 20 years. Mr Van Miert believes, the sources said, that it is hypocrisy for the Americans to preach the virtues of open competition while endorsing deals that lock out Airbus from big airlines for two decades.

If Boeing fails to offer a remedy, the EU could declare the deal illegal. That would enable it to fine the company up to 10 per cent of its annual turnover and to cause havoc for Boeing sales in law courts around the world.

Phil Condit, Boeing's chairman, said there was only one issue for Europe in the planned merger. "Does the combination of Boeing with McDonnell Douglas's commercial airplane unit have a restrictive effect on competition?" The answer was no, he said, because McDonnell Douglas's share of the market had fallen to 4 per cent while Airbus was providing 30 per cent of the fleet.

The EU is to deliver a final ruling on the deal in late July.



A university student, framed by a hole in a banner, joins a demonstration in front of the National Assembly in Lisbon. About 1,000 students took part in the protest against the Portuguese Government's education policy

Communist 'ugly sister' dreams of happy ending to Marxist fairytale

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN VITRY-SUR-SEINE

THE Communist Party could be thought of as the "ugly sister" of French politics that might — just might — get to go to the government ball, if the Cinderella Socialists emerge victorious in the approaching parliamentary elections.

The Socialists have formed an uneasy pact with the extreme left party, for without the support of the Communists — in second-round voting and in parliament — they have no chance of forming the next government. If, defying

predictions, that comes to pass on June 2, France may have a Cabinet containing Communist ministers for the first time in 13 years.

The opinion polls and the gradual decline of the Parti Communiste Français over the last three decades make that prospect unlikely, perhaps even a fantasy, but as Robert Hue, the Communist leader, strode into a campaign rally on the suburbs of Paris this week he exuded bonhomie, outrage and confidence in equal measure.



"A Communist vote is a vote of sanction against the Government, the strongest rejection of the unacceptable National Front," M Hue thundered.

With his short stature, impressive girth, bald head and a grey beard, he resembles nothing so much as Snow White's eighth companion; let us call him Comrade, a strange combination of Grumpy, Happy and Sleepy.

The 300 Communist faithful assembled in a municipal gym here also reflected those characteristics: grumpy at the "devastations" inflicted on the working class by the Government of the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé; happy at even the faintest prospect of leverage over a Socialist-led government; yet oddly somnolent, suspended in history between a failed past and an uncertain future.

The Communists held 24 seats in the outgoing parliament and still attract around 10 per cent of the national vote. But for all its continued prominence in French political life, the party is a nostalgic fossil. Since its heyday in the Sixties and Seventies, when the party routinely attained 25 per cent, the party has steadily dwindled.

Since M Hue took over from Georges Marchais three years ago, the party has changed much. "Democratic centralism" — that grim euphemism for preventing debate on leadership decisions — may have gone, but much of the old party remains: including the hammer and sickle and the bitter internal disputes over the legacy of Stalinism. Its platform is a familiar one: massive taxes on the wealthy and companies, boosting the minimum wage, cutting VAT, creating 1.5 million jobs, and stopping privatisation.

After the last parliamentary elections, one quarter of the Left's seats were held by Communists. After this election, the Socialist proportion is certain to rise dramatically, and the Communist Party is thus in the paradoxical position of wanting a Socialist victory, but one as unopposed as possible to ensure its maximum influence.

The temperature in the gym rose steadily with the heat of M Hue's denunciations. Beneath large signs declaring "Défense de l'union" party loyalists puffed away and a steadily sickening pall of smoke enveloped France's perennial political rebels, still collectively longing for the happy ending to the fairy tale promised by Marx.

They, and that prospect, seemed to grow more hazy and distant by the moment.

Pressure on Kabila to choose Cabinet

FROM DAVID ORR IN KINSHASA

IF Laurent Kabila thought winning a civil war hard work, it was because he had never tried to form a government.

This was the wry observation of one Western diplomat as the self-declared President of the new Democratic Republic of Congo struggled last night to put together an interim administration in the wake of his victory over the ousted dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko.

Mr Kabila had vowed to announce a transitional government within 72 hours of his capture of the capital, Kinshasa, last weekend. But it soon became clear that he had another battle to fight after winning the war. Central to the problem has been finding a role for Etienne Tshisekedi, the populist opposition leader. Three times named Prime Minister, and three times sacked during the Mobutu era, Mr Tshisekedi has been a thorn in the side of the victorious Alliance of Demo-

cratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire.

Considered a self-serving opportunist by many in the rebel alliance, Mr Tshisekedi nonetheless enjoys widespread popularity, particularly in the capital. His supporters have been out in force, agitating for the appointment of their leader as Prime Minister. Mr Kabila was due to meet Mr Tshisekedi for talks yesterday afternoon in Kinshasa.

The arrival of rebel alliance forces in the capital was greeted with jubilation by the population. But Mr Tshisekedi's so-called radical opposition party, the UDPS, is insistent that it has also fought a long struggle, albeit a peaceful one, to oust Mr Mobutu and his cronies.

If Mr Kabila leaves Mr Tshisekedi adrift on the political high seas, then he is unlikely to gain the consensus he needs for the daunting voyage ahead. If, however, he pulls him on board, Mr Kabila might find himself with a mutiny on his hands before port is in sight.

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Kohl plans to boost jobs in east

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

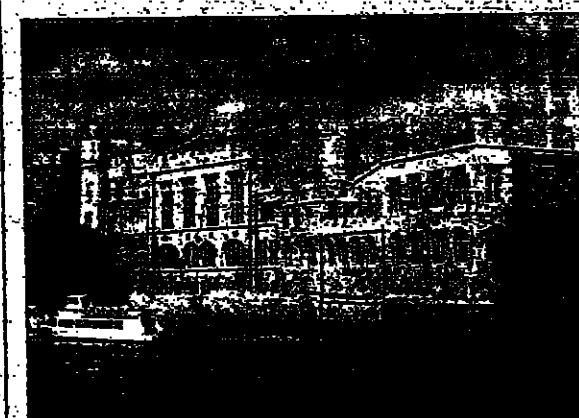
HELMUT KOHL, the German Chancellor, joined forces with union and employers' leaders yesterday to try to turn around the ailing economy of eastern Germany, which is keeping unemployment levels high and making it increasingly difficult for the country to stay on course for economic and monetary union.

The aim of the joint initiative, the Chancellor said, is to halt the loss of jobs in the east and create about 100,000 posts a year from next year. Unemployment is disproportionately high in the east, contributing 1.28 million to Germany's jobless total of 4.2 million. Officially, the eastern unemployment rate is 17 per cent, but experts calculate that in fact one in three east Germans is still searching for a permanent job.

The Chancellor, who presented his plan in Berlin with Dieter Schulte, the union confederation chief, has a four-point programme:

- Employers and unions in individual east German firms have declared their readiness to agree wage increases below the nationally agreed levels. Wage demands from the unions will be sensitive to the precarious financial situation of different employers.
- Companies will buy in more of their supplies from east German producers.
- The Government will extend its investment support until the end of 2004.
- All sides will do their bit to reduce production costs and improve productivity. Productivity in eastern Germany is running at 55 per cent of western levels.

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CHANGING TIMES

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Kremlin leader says he will personally supervise changes in military

Yeltsin sacks defence chief for failing to reform army

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

A FURIOUS President Yeltsin yesterday sacked the Russian Defence Minister and the armed forces' chief of staff and vowed that other heads would roll if urgently needed military reforms were not introduced.

In an explosive, televised session of the Defence Council, the Russian leader shook with anger as he berated Igor Rodionov, the Defence Minister, for being lazy and incompetent during his ten-month tenure.

"I am simply not satisfied, I am outraged at the course of reform in the army and the state of the military in general," said the Kremlin leader, as he pounded the table with his fist and glared at Mr Rodionov, who stood, head bowed in ghastly silence.

"You have done a bad job," he said. "You should be telling me today what you have done. You have nothing to say. Many of you will not be here if you proceed like this."

The outburst was triggered by the military's failure to introduce any real reforms, in spite of its disastrous campaign in Chechnya and its failure to pay, equip or train

the demoralised 1.7 million men in uniform. Reformists in the Kremlin led by Yuri Baturin, the main presidential military adviser, have long advocated making deep cuts in personnel and turning the military into a Western-style professional army. Mr Yeltsin wants the reforms completed by the turn of the century.

However, the move has been resisted by the top brass, whose ranks would be the first to be cut and who argue that establishing a professional force would require additional funding, which the Government does not want to spend.

Mr Yeltsin is clearly livid, however, about the recent daily reports of corruption in the armed forces, which have led to the sacking of several senior officers and the imprisonment earlier this week of a Deputy Defence Minister.

"Soldiers get thinner and generals get fatter," said Mr Yeltsin, who is also Russia's supreme commander. "Generals have built dachas all over Russia. Generals are not interested in reorganising the army because they may lose their privileges. They are the main



Igor Rodionov, who was dismissed for ten months of "laziness and incompetence", although supporters claimed he had been made a scapegoat

obstacle in implementing army reforms."

Mr Yeltsin said he would personally supervise reforms in the military and he has ordered that a report outlining the reform process be ready for discussion by June 25.

"All government bodies must work to promote mili-

tary reform," he said. "If a day passes when nothing has been done for the army, the day is lost."

The Russian President appointed General Igor Sergeev, 60, the head of the strategic rocket forces, to become acting Defence Minister. General Viktor Chechevatov,

52, the former commander of the Far East military district and a long-time Kremlin favourite, was appointed as the new head of the general staff to replace General Viktor Samsonov.

Liberal politicians praised Mr Yeltsin for finally tackling reform head on, while oppo-

nents condemned the move as a further weakening of the country's crumbling defences.

Aleksandr Lebed, the former paratroop general and presidential hopeful, said Mr Rodionov had allowed himself to become the President's scapegoat.

Gennadi Zyuganov, the

Communist Party leader, said Mr Yeltsin should be the one facing dismissal for "ruining the armed forces". He said: "The President has left the army without pay, without new weapons, without apartments. He got everything into a mess, but does not want to answer for it."

Moscow cuts island garrison

FROM REUTER IN TOKYO

RUSSIA will withdraw some of its troops from islands at the heart of a perennial territorial dispute with Japan, the head of the islands local government said.

Vladimir Zema, chief of the South Kuriles district, told Japanese reporters visiting the islands that the two army units in Kunashiri would be pulled out by the end of next month, *Asahi Shimbun* reported on Wednesday. The reporters were accompanying Tatsuya Hori, Governor of

Hokkaido, on a visit to the islands. The dispute over the islands, called the South Kuriles by Russia and the Northern Territories by Japan, has prevented the two countries from signing a Second World War peace treaty. The stationing of 3,500 Russian troops in the islands has hindered talks between the countries. It was not clear if Russia would withdraw all the troops. Kunashiri, Habomai, Shikotan and Etorofu, northeast of the northernmost main

Japanese island of Hokkaido, were seized by Soviet troops in the closing days of the war. During a visit to Japan in 1993, President Yeltsin of Russia agreed to settle the dispute through dialogue and promised that he would withdraw troops from the islands, although he did not say when.

Last week, Igor Rodionov, dismissed yesterday as Russian Defence Minister, visited Tokyo and handed to Japan documents saying that Moscow had cut the troops in the



islands to 3,500 by 1995, but he did not speak about more cuts. Yukihiko Ikeda, the Japanese Foreign Minister, will be in Moscow this weekend for talks with President Yeltsin.

Belarus and Russia prepare to sign watered-down union pact

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT Lukashenko of Belarus flew to Moscow yesterday to put the final touches to a much-trumpeted charter of union between his country and Russia, which he is due to sign with President Yeltsin today.

Aimed originally at reforgeing the political, military and economic links that bound the two countries together in Soviet times, the agreement

has since been watered down so much as to represent little more than a declaration of intent, which does far more to highlight the discrepancies between them than set any basis for union.

Even as far as intent is concerned, Mr Lukashenko's ideas are at variance with Mr Yeltsin's. The Russian leader has spoken of an eventual merger, under which Belarus would simply be absorbed by Russia in a new federation, much as it was in Tsarist

times. But Mr Yeltsin was circumspect in his comments at the start of yesterday's talks. "We will agree on everything that is necessary. We will not make decisions that could contradict the interests of our countries and peoples," he said.

Mr Lukashenko was also uncharacteristically low-key, suggesting that his visit amounted to no more than a formality. "I have come to seal de jure what has already been achieved de facto," he said.

Swinging Swedes lose their libido

BY ROGER BOYES

THE rampant sex life of Swedes, one of the great myths of modern times, has taken a battering in the most comprehensive survey since the 1960s when the country was famed for its promiscuous couples and athletic "porno" stars.

According to the Stockholm Institute for Popular Health, more than half of Swedish men and women claim to be sexually dissatisfied, complaining of low libido, impotence and problems in achieving orgasm.

Only a quarter of Swedish women claim to have had an affair during their married lives and a third, well below the figures in the sex survey of 1967, of males admit to having committed adultery.

The average Swede has intercourse about six times a month, virtually unchanged since the 1960s, and some age groups, such as 31 to 35-year-olds, have sex less often than their counterparts in 1967.

The figures have come as a surprise to other European countries, such as Germany, which took the cue from Sweden to launch their own sexual revolutions.

Films such as *I Am Curious - Yellow* and, less memorably, *Three Swedish Girls on Ibiza*, contributed to an image of healthy blond people ready to get off their bikes and cast aside their inhibitions after the first aquavit. Now it seems that either the Swedish sexual revolution never existed, or it has simply fizzled out.

The comparative survey indicates that a third of all Swedish women have lost all interest in sex. The average number of sexual partners for a Swedish male is seven; for a woman, five. And if the Swedish film industry is to be believed, that number of partners could have been the result of a fortnight's holiday rather than a lifetime.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

THEY'RE BACK

Steven Spielberg, the man with a monster talent, reveals how he created the new Jurassic Park

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Murder and a mother's anguish

The kidnapping, torture and brutal death of the 17-year-old daughter of a famous singer has shaken Taiwan and highlighted the country's gangster connections, reports Jonathan Mirsky

The torture and murder of a 17-year-old girl is threatening the stability of Taiwan's Government. In unprecedented demonstrations, tens of thousands of people have demanded an end to the escalating kidnappings and murders which reveal the links between the authorities and the island's gangsters.

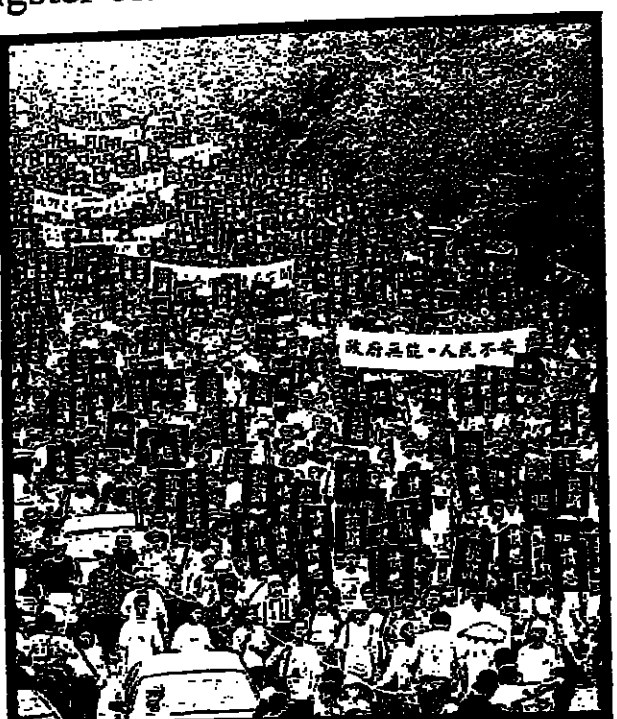
It is no wonder that women, parents, social workers and teachers are besides themselves, and that last Sunday 50,000 of them again took to the streets of Taipei, Taiwan's capital. Since 1992 the violent crime rate in Taiwan, with its population of 21 million, has tripled. There were 98 kidnappings, often of children, in 1995; 156 in 1996, and at least 40 this spring. Some of Taiwan's best-known people have been victims.

The kidnappings have been punctuated by murders. Last November Liu Pang-yu, a county police chief, was at home with seven guests. All were killed, one by one, with single shots through their heads. In December Peng Wan-ju, a feminist and politician, was raped and murdered.

But what tipped the ghastly mess into the streets was the particularly brutal killing of 17-year-old Pai Hsiao-yen. She was the daughter of Pai Ping-ping, a famous singer and television personality, who now blames the Government, the police and the press for her daughter's violent end.

The 50,000 demonstrators last Sunday were furious shouting "murderer" and calling for President Lee Teng-hui to resign.

The authorities observe that they solve a majority of violent



On May 4, 50,000 people protest over Hsiao-yen's death

crime cases and that the police have been given the latest equipment. One chilling answer is that some of the most spectacular murders remain unsolved and many kidnappings go unreported because, as is almost invariably the case on Taiwan, families of kidnap victims pay up quickly and say nothing afterwards.

This arrangement did not work with Pai Hsiao-yen. She was probably tortured and murdered within days of her disappearance but not before her captors sent her mother photographs of the half-naked girl bound and gagged, and others of a severed finger. They wanted a ransom of more than £3 million. It was

never paid. There was a police fire-fight with suspected kidnappers who escaped, and on April 28 Hsiao-yen was found battered and dead in a drainage ditch, weighted down with chains and a hammer.

Ms Pai blames the Government for ignoring her daughter's plight. The police, she says, tried to persuade her not to pay the ransom and bungled the search. Taiwan kidnappers of the sort who snatched her daughter now rival the police in their technological expertise and can listen to police communications even if they are, as claimed, up to the American FBI's standard.

Ms Pai blames the press for breaking its code of not reporting kidnappings until they are over. In this case, she claims, they followed her everywhere, even using a helicopter, and from April 26 until April 28 there were hourly television stories.

During the terrible wait for news of her daughter, Ms Pai called on the Government to shift its attention from Taiwan's international position to domestic problems. President Lee's reputation was damaged by reports that he told his inner advisers that foreign affairs were indeed more important than a teenager's killing, and suggesting that the mother was part of a political conspiracy to discredit him.

Although President Lee soon called on Ms Pai with his wife to express their sorrow for the girl's death, it was too late. The public was furious. The President's secretary announced that Mr Lee took full responsibility for public safety, and apologised to Taiwan's people for not having acted vigorously enough in the Pai case and others.

It is the others, obscure compared with Hsiao-yen, that explain why the President's apology seemed paltry. In October 1995, a boy was snatched from his house in Kaohsiung, a city in Taiwan's south. After a brief telephone conversation with his mother, in which he begged her to pay his captors, the boy was never seen again. His mother says it took 18 months for the police to issue a missing persons' report.

And, just before Pai Hsiao-yen was kidnapped, a boy was seized in a Taipei suburb. The kidnappers demanded almost \$800,000 but, probably panicked by the uproar attending Hsiao-yen's abduction, they killed the boy.



Pai Ping-ping, left, who was sent a photo of a severed finger by the captors of his daughter, Pai Hsiao-yen, right

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It is this kind of thing which caused the May demonstrations in Taipei. On May 4, 50,000 people went into the streets, one of the largest crowds ever not connected to election campaigns, during which competing parties are skilled at mobilising their supporters.

On May 8, Ma Ying-jeou, the former Justice Minister and then Minister without Portfolio, resigned, saying: "A series of recent crimes makes me feel deeply ashamed as a Cabinet minister." He accused many of his colleagues of putting private interests ahead of public ones, a reasonable charge in a country where hundreds of Nationalist Party elected officials have been indicted for criminal connections — but remain free.

President Lee declared last week and again on Sunday, that Premier and Vice-President Lien Chan would leave office in July, and said he would shake up his Cabinet. But it is believed that Mr Lee is grooming Mr Lien to succeed him in the elections in the year 2000, and that the Premier's departure is not an actual sign of regret.

The Nationalists may not be in a position to win in three years. They hold a mere two-vote majority in the Legislature and could lose their overwhelming strength in local governments, where many seats were won corruptly. The kidnappings and murders have highlighted the ruling party's symbiotic relationship with gangsters, a link established in the 1920s when Chiang Kai-shek, who succeeded Sun Yat-sen as Nationalist leader, was sponsored by Shanghai's most notorious gangsters, the Ching Bang, or Green Gang.

"Everything is coming together," says Antonio Chiang, one of Taiwan's best investigative journalists and editors: "the police, corruption, a political power struggle, disappointment with President Lee.

the gangster connections of the Nationalists and the accumulation of so many cases. It's a real threat to the Nationalist Party. It's not enough to apologise and reshuffle the Cabinet. We have 80,000 police and an FBI equivalent of 2,000 men. They've got the best modern technology."

Mr Chiang says there are two kinds of kidnappers:



Pai blames the Government

"Freelancers and professionals. Most of the real brutality comes from the freelancers. The professionals — 'men of honour' they call themselves — are disgusted by murders like the Pai girl's. They are volunteering to help the police."

The professionals, Mr Chiang says, wait for "contracts" from those wanting to make money from a kidnapping. They do the job quickly, wait to bargain with the family, do the deal, deliver the victim — usually alive — and then flee to the mainland, 100

miles across the Taiwan Straits, by smugglers' boats.

"It's the rich that the gangsters are after, and they know the families will pay without telling the police, whom no one trusts," says Jean-Pierre Cabestan, a French China specialist who lives much of the time in Taipei. "They think the police won't catch the kidnappers or, if they do, the victim will already have been killed. No one trusts the Government, either. They know that Pai Ping-ping went straight to her high-level friends in the Government when her daughter was kidnapped — and the girl was killed. Public opinion against the authorities is very hot."

Antonio Chiang sees what he calls "a dangerous game". The kidnappers, he says, "tell the victims' families to go to such a street, such a river, such a mountain. Sometimes the police are tapping the phones. One victim, Wu Dung-jin, was from a very rich family. His wife knew the police were in the know and she did everything she could to put the police off the track. She paid and got her husband back. But around the same time that Pai Ping-ping's daughter was kidnapped, so was another girl. The family was willing to pay. But the gangsters panicked and killed her. At least they've been arrested. But the fact is the police are more interested in breaking the cases than the safety of the victims. Another fact is the gangster support for the ruling party."

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Min. Investment	Gross*	Gross CAR**	Net†
£100,000+	6.25%	6.22%	4.84%
£50,000	6.00%	5.96%	4.64%
£20,000	5.75%	5.72%	4.48%
£10,000	5.50%	5.48%	4.28%
£5,000	5.00%	4.96%	3.88%

RATES EFFECTIVE FROM 2ND JUNE 1997

Min. Investment	Gross*	Gross CAR**	Net†
£100,000+	6.75%	6.72%	5.24%
£50,000	6.50%	6.48%	5.04%
£20,000	6.25%	6.22%	4.84%
£5,000	6.00%	5.96%	4.64%

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That's why the Lady's had enough

ALAN WELLS

The conflicting claims of battered wives and battered families left Lady Parker with no choice but to resign from a charity that she supported.

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



The resignation of Lady Parker from Refuge, the charitable organisation that provides shelter for battered wives, is a rum business. Gill Parker, wife of Sir Peter, a working GP for 35 years, the mother of four successful children, witty and well-connected, is an asset to a charitable letterhead, an adornment to a committee. Few charitable fund-raising events could match the flair and style of Lady Parker's Christmas concert and dinner in an old Battersea schoolhouse (home of her actor son Nat) in 1995.

They go along and destroy their families at a stroke

Aid, founded by Erin Pizzey 25 years ago when nobody questioned a man's right to knock his wife about. Refuge has long teetered on the brink of financial collapse. But Sandra Horley, its director, gathered patrons such as Diana, Princess of Wales, and Cherie Booth QC, whose fine speeches were vital, Lady Parker says, in raising the awareness of people who still think a woman "must enjoy it, or they would leave".

with terrible accusations, allegedly dredged from the recesses of memory. This happened to a friend of Lady Parker's, a man who believes that his wife's death was hastened by their daughter's wild allegations. There has been a phenomenal escalation in psychotherapy and counselling in recent years. "It comes straight from America, where you have a therapist as you might have a dentist, and it's very attractive to vulnerable young women, typically middle-class girls who can afford it."

"So along you go, with any kind of problem, anxiety or boyfriend trouble, and the psychotherapist suggests that your father probably abused you. 'Tell me about your parents,' they say. 'Oh very nice, affectionate. How affectionate?' And if you say 'Nothing wrong,' they say you're in denial, which is unanswerable, if you are emotionally weak. They haven't the confidence to reply 'No I'm bloody well not'. It all comes from Freud, this idea of repression. And once you have been persuaded to say 'My daddy abused me', it escalates: you then say your mother colluded in the abuse."



"Some accusers recall being abused at six months. There isn't even a memory seat in the brain until you're about four. The memories before that come from adapting what you have been told"

induced. It is deployed for a miscellany of complaints. And it invites patients to choose the victim role. (The notion of overcoming life's slings and arrows, the grandmotherly precept of "Rise above it dear" is out of style in the late 20th century.)

"People ask me: 'But how do you know those parents are not a bunch of paedophiles?' Nobody denies that there is sexual abuse, a very terrible thing. And there is such a thing as being in denial. People can forget or repress one big, awful trauma. But we have never met a case of a woman who has been sexually abused over a long period of time who has forgotten it," Lady Parker says.

"Some of the accusers recall being abused at six months old. Well, there isn't even a memory seat in the brain — the hippocampus — until you're about four. Almost certainly, the memories before that come from adapting what you have been told."

The British False Memory Society's director, Roger Scottford, is himself an accused parent. His advisory board includes figures such as Prof Larry Weiskrantz, Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Oxford, an authority on memory; and Professor Patrick Bateson, provost of King's, Cambridge. The society runs a telephone helpline and organises meetings and lectures. At last week's lecture by the American academic Frederick Crews, 200 people came.

Once accusations against parents are made, they are very hard to retract. "Some of our members say 'My daughter has sent me a Christmas card' or 'She's bringing her baby to see me' and we encourage them to keep the door open without insisting on an apology or a retraction first. But by that stage, the parents often say 'I can't see her again, unless she admits she was wrong'."

It certainly never struck Lady Parker that her work with false memory was incompatible with working for Refuge. But in February, Hilary Hannah, Editor of a magazine called *Women at Work* (its letterhead says "Part of the Thought Chain"), withdrew its support for Refuge after reading of Lady Parker's connection with false memory. She wrote to Sandra Horley, explaining that some people on her magazine were survivors of sexual abuse. Ms Horley

I'm deeply sorry. The cause of Refuge is close to my heart

And I know that child sex abuse happens. But what about the mothers who are accused by their daughters? They are of the sisterhood, too. It is not controversial to say that the sudden spate of these accusations may not all be verified."

Lady Parker had enough experience of listening to patients' woes as a GP, to discern when people were mentally ill and needed psychiatric help. She herself is emotionally robust, a role model for any working mother. As Gillian Rowe-Dutton, medical student at Oxford, she caught the eye of Kenneth Tynan one day. Smitten, Tynan sent her a note inviting her to tea. They were not an obvious match: Gill was a country girl, and "I felt there was nothing of the

country about Ken at all, not a blade of grass." But soon their engagement was announced. Tynan made a habit of getting engaged. When she left him, he wrote her a long recriminatory letter, and another to her diplomat father. A row ensued, during which Tynan slapped her face "very hard". It was the only time she was ever hit by anyone.

Luckily, the dashing and more dependable Peter Parker hove into her life and they have been married for 45 years. With four adult children doing well — Oliver writing films, Nat soon to start filming *Far From The Madding Crowd*, Lucy running a company called Professional Presentations, and Alan running his financial PR outfit, the Parkers can be said to have come admirably through the trials of parenthood.

They have recently moved into a high-ceilinged Kensington flat, with a patch of lawn so tiny you could cut it with nail-scissors. (Her more famous Oxfordshire garden at Minster Lovell, about which she wrote a book, *The Purest of Pleasures*, is open on June 1.) The walls are covered in the drawings of William Blake, Sir Peter's passion. The flat was the scene of a spirited party on election night: Lady Parker has never voted anything but Labour and she feels invigorated by the sense of a new dawn.

MORTGAGES

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Philip Howard



Do you need a microeconomic regulator? I do

We wish the upwardly mobile Howard Davies lots of luck in his new role as Censor of the City and Macroeconomic Maestros. Not that he needs us. He will do the job better than the present regime of old-boy watchdogs, who are as blind as Argus and bark like a basenji, the Congolese hunting dog distinguished for never doing anything in the night-time; it cannot bark. Those City poodles are as thick as two short Jack Russells, to boot. (To boot is the only thing to do with Jack Russells in some yappenstances, but mind your ankles.) Even the Spice Girls would make more efficient regulators than the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street.

But however successful Mr Davies is, he is not going to make a difference to those who are not merchant bankers, utility fat cats or City sharks. What most of us need even more than a macroeconomic regulator is a microeconomic regulator, to help us with the financial and economic problems of everyday life. Such as the new do-it-yourself income-tax returns. These expensively customised Inland Revenue books with question boxes in reddish colours are useless to those of us who are colour-blind. And the instructions on how to fill them in are as tedious as the instructions for contributors to the *New Dictionary of National Biography*. Who wants to read 80 pages of type for a job that will not earn enough to pay tax on, even if you could identify the box to tick? I blame Plato. He taught generations that what mattered in life was to be a philosopher-king, or at any rate a philosopher-princeling. And that form-filling, accountancy and economics were "banalistic", that is working-class, trades.

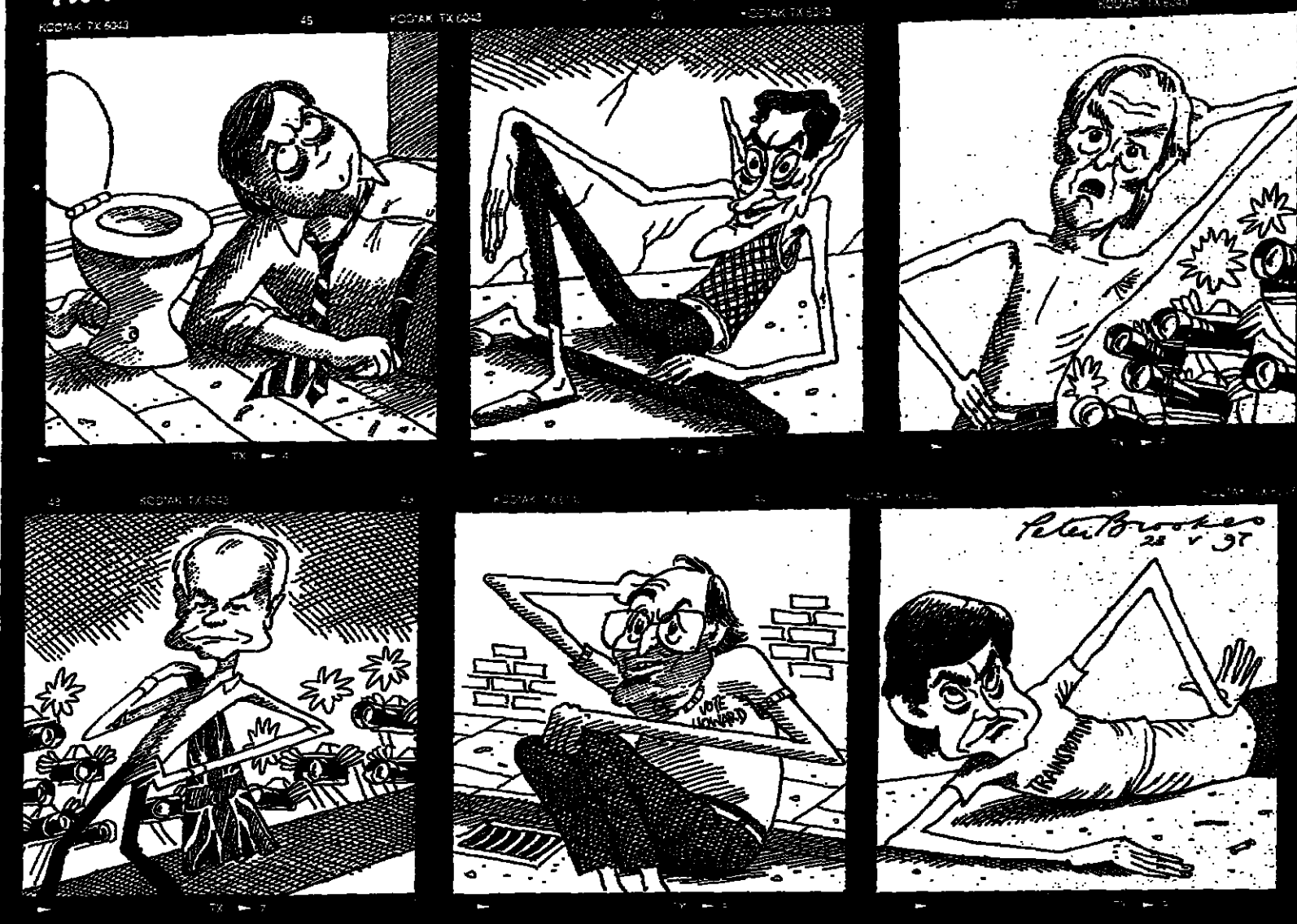
While at the ballet, my attention wandered while the dancer was whirling around simulating Anna Andersen having a Freudian slip about whether she was really Anastasia Romanov. And my attention said: "You are skint. That means no money for scrimmaging for overpriced drinks in the crush bar, thank the Tsar. Remember to draw some cash from the hole-in-the-wall tomorrow. And wouldn't it be a laugh if you had forgotten your pin-number, as Anastasia has, not surprisingly in the circus, forgotten her unhappy past?"

So I slept on it. And the pin-numbers danced round my head from ear left to ear right. And six of them kept on coming back. So at dawn I inserted my plastic Open Sesame, and tapped in the numbers in various permutations. Jack Russells barked and nudged. The machine flashed "Wrong Number. Consult Your Branch" twice, and then swallowed the plastic. So I blubbed a bit, and then walked on manfully round the Serpentine, keeping Russells well clear of William and Mary and their new cypresses. And, of course, my pin-number came back as certain as the nine-times table by the Round Pond. Four numbers, not six.

But at least I still had a credit card, and £1.57 in small change in pockets and crumby crevices of my Puffer. Except that on Sunday, in Suffolk, I removed my wallet in order to play cricket, football and baseball better with small boys. And forgot to recover it before the homeward tide. And so there was no way to pay for a petrol fill-up at Hendon. All week I have been queuing for the Tube instead of sailing through with my season ticket. All week I have had to work laboriously through Wapping immigration instead of striding into the word laboratory with my passport. My bank branch is 450 twisted miles away in Ayrshire. The Circle Line was held up for an hour by a corgi on the line. Finances are not just parlous. They are as barren as a spin-doctor's soundbite.

So I need my microeconomic regulator to manage these banalistic details of life so that I can get on with the Platonism of daily journalism. I was once given a personal organiser, but I left it on the Underground the same day while absorbed in the crossword. Perhaps some test-tube could clone Howard Davies so that each of us philosopher-kings could have our own personal regulator. This sounds like the Englishman's eternal nostalgia for the nursery discipline of a stern Nanny or Scottish Granny. But even if we each had a personal regulator, how could we manage to remember his pin-number and not to leave him on the Tube?

HERO-CHIC: THAT HIGH-ON-THE-DRUG-OF-POWER FASHION APPEAL...



Hague blots his copybook

The rising hope of stern, unbending Tories has snubbed the man to whom he owes it all

The irony is delectable. In attacking John Major as a trimmer, William Hague has proved himself a trimmer. Calling for boldness because he was under pressure to look bold, he has shown a yellow streak I never knew he had. Perhaps Mr Major, believing Mr Hague must advance his prospects however he can, did not mind. I do not care. It was not courteous, it was not dignified, to speak as Mr Hague did.

Running scared from what people might say — that he was in sympathy with a former Prime Minister in whose Cabinet he had, until weeks ago, been happy to serve — he has confirmed the worst fears we might have entertained of him: that William Hague is just another ambitious politician, ready to fill the sails of his ambition with the wind of prevailing prejudice.

Using that speech on Wednesday to wound (but not quite, by naming John Major, to strike), Mr Hague reminded me of the classroom swot who pulls a face at an unpopular boy in order to ingratiate himself with the playground bullies. This does not fore-shadow decisive leadership. For a 36-year-old newcomer to the world of political grown-ups to sully his campaign for the leadership with a side-swipe at a senior colleague who is still his leader, who leads with dignity, who has just endured one of the most difficult premierships in modern history, followed by a gruelling general election, and who must be downcast at its results, was cheap.

The logic — no, let us not spoil the word "logic" by lending it to the service of this spiteful little Tory leadership contest — the logic is obvious: so obvious that even Tory MPs can see it. The rationale behind Mr Hague's denunciation of the leader to whom he owes his ministerial career is that thumbing his nose at John Major will make him new friends. He wants to ingratiate himself with Mr Major's detractors in the Conservative Party.

Take care, William. Remember what Mother said about pulling faces at people: if the wind changes while you're doing it, your grimace may stick. Well, the wind has just changed.

Why did he do it? Oh, it's all so depressingly feeble. Someone has whispered in Mr Hague's ear. "There's a little problem, William. Some of the lads are muttering that you are John's protégé. The phrase 'son of Major' has

been heard in the Commons smoking room."

"Now what you need to do [at this point, in what passes for a modern conversation about political principle, a pencil and paper are produced to sketch arrows and links and overlapping circles] is make a sort of... growing noise to please the people in this circle, but not loud enough to upset the people in that circle, hopefully bringing some of this circle into your circle, without moving your circle away from that circle."

Goddit? Just a little growl. Perhaps a word which may serve as a coded signal, such as "fudge" — or how about "moving fudge"? They'll guess what you mean. Lobby correspondents will tug your friends' sleeves and ask them to confirm it. And your friends will reply with something terribly subtle, such as "make of it what you will", tapping their noses and looking significant, like that clever Mr Mandelson who's done so much for the Labour Party.

"But what?", asks Mr Hague, "will John think of me? I mean, what people whisper is true. He probably does support me. I was his protégé. He brought me on. For years he's been telling journalists how good I am. I owe him a lot. This is no way to show gratitude."

Ah, that's the problem. Just what people fear, you see: that you're the appointed successor. Kiss of death. Which is why it's so important to knock the idea on the head. John will forgive you, for heaven's sake, William. He knows how this game is played. He'd probably prefer you to distance yourself from him, if it will help.

"But what about his supporters out there in the constituencies? All those nice old ladies who have taken a shine to me? They stayed loyal to him until the end. Am I not letting them down? What will they think, to hear me talking like this now?"

They'll wonder a bit, William. But if you don't actually mention John — just say "fudge" instead — they'll blame the

BBC for stirring this up and give you the benefit of the doubt. They want to like you. You can say something nice in your acceptance speech. Once you're leader they'll eat out of your hands."

Oh how I hate this mean calculating thing we are learning to recognise as the new politics! They call it cunning, but it is so transparent. They call it clever, but it is self-defeating. They call it effective, but it is self-defeating. We have arrived at the political equivalent of painting-by-numbers. Never mind the argument, never mind ideas, courage, imagination: listen to the focus groups, join up the dots. Study the instructions and note which squares need to be coloured slightly pink, and which slightly blue and which left blank. Apply the necessary shadings — and lo! you have a portrait of yourself in the purple of leadership!

This is the politics to which, over seven years, John Major was forced to descend. He made the descent with skill, with a flimsy majority and the pistols of the Bastards at his back, and a constant need to keep a working administration working; he had to. A Euro-friendly nod here, a Eurosceptical curve there. A kiss for Lady Thatcher and a pat on the shoulder for Ted Heath. A late-night burning of the lamps as the last tortured touches were made to the various formulae by which he might stitch his mutinous crew together for one more vote.

And he always did. Another day was won. But something was lost. "Fudge", dear William, was not the problem. Every leader needs fudge when disclosing his hand imperils the mission. Should you become leader, we will not mind if you fudge from time to time. Indeed, we trust you know how to. But in the integrity of the mission, in the integrity of the missionary, we have to believe, somewhere along the way, humiliated by the need to keep his ear always to the ground, John Major lost personal credibility. If you, William, are now to

Matthew Parris

Heath fire

LIGHT shines at last on the complicated financial affairs of Sir Edward Heath. He has been paid nearly £400,000 for his memoirs. Last week, it emerged that Hodder Headline had bought the still unfinished work, but as news of what it has paid crept out, even publishing's doughtiest lunchers found themselves pushing away their *crème brûlée* in shock.

Ever since he was forced out of office in 1975, Sir Edward has toyed with the idea of his memoirs as if it was a prawn ball at a Chinese banquet. In 1985, he signed a deal with Weidenfeld. Nine years on, a few documents had been assembled down at Sir Edward's Salisbury home, but the typewriter lay quiet and the deal quietly evaporated.

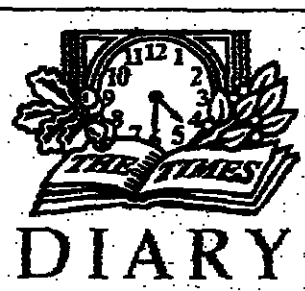
Then in 1994, a team of young Heathites was assembled under the former *Daily Telegraph* gossip columnist Charles de Lisle to reconstruct the former Prime Minister's life, from yachting and conducting to Westminster and the art of leaving blanks in the Register of Members' Interests. A 60-page synopsis was presented to publishers at the end of March, and the bidding began.

In no time, the price had shot

beyond the £250,000 estimate. "It was the best synopsis we have ever seen," said Roland Phillips, Hodder's non-fiction publishing director. He promises the book will be huge, though rivals expect it to be a slow-burner, selling steadily for years, rather than an instant hit.

Oasis

THERE'S little chance of the Prince of Wales being caught out



by a hosepipe ban at Highgrove this summer. He has spent thousands of pounds installing a computer-operated drip-watering system for his veg patch and borders.

Buckingham Palace is reluctant to comment on the specifics of the irrigation system, but some details emerge in this month's issue of the Prince's magazine, *Perspectives*. Among beneficiaries of the up-market sprinkler will be the Prince's vegetables, planted in consultation with the royal chefs. They include ornamental lettuce, the purple Brussels sprout *Falstaff*, some 18th-century carrots which are coloured purple, white and yellow, and a substantial quota of potatoes.

The Prince also turns out to be one of the few gardeners to persevere with the notoriously difficult Highland Burgundy Red potato. But with a watering system esti-

mated by experts to have cost some £30,000 to lay, his spuds should be safe this year.

Unfinished

AN INVITATION has arrived at Conservative Central Office for Charles Lewington, the dearly departed head of press. It is from "The Public Relations Finishing School", an outfit which organises seminars such as "How to Handle a Crisis" — theory and practice — with talks on how to keep negative press coverage to a minimum, organise crisis press conferences and what to say when things go wrong, "how to get 'good news' in the press", and "how to get coverage for un-newsworthy products". All this might have been more useful about two months ago.

No Khan do

DUTY comes before pleasure for Jemima Khan, wife of the former Pakistan cricket captain, who is in Lahore with her friend Diana, Princess of Wales, for the launch of a £17 million campaign in aid of Imran's charity cancer hospital. On Friday, she failed to show up for a party at the Goldsmith family home in Ham, which she was supposed to be co-hosting with her friend Laetitia Cash, drama queen



Laetitia Cash and the absent Jemima

and daughter of the Eurosceptic MP William. "It was a bit disappointing," said one of her many invites, "she had hoped to be there but I think the charity launch happened sooner than she had expected. She wanted to see her father in France before she went back to Pakistan, so she couldn't be at the party." Laetitia apparently took her friend's absence in poor humour. Highly strung as a result of the pressure of hosting the party, she inevitably became more and more agitated. By the end of the evening



she could have been forgiven for throwing the odd *vol-au-vent*. ● In the turmoil of *Kinshasa* at the weekend, the British were an oasis of civilisation. When the press corps turned up on the manicured lawns of the Embassy to ask whether the Ambassador would recognise Laurent Kabila's newly named Republic of the Congo, a diplomat replied: "Good God man, the Foreign Office can't possibly decide that — it's a Sunday."

Full steam ahead for HMS Euro

John Lloyd urges Blair to enter EMU in the first wave

THE parcel has been passed, and the music has stopped. The largest question in British politics is in Labour's hands now. Will we, and when will we, join the economic and monetary union? Labour has already changed the question by narrowing it. The question is no longer if, but when. Tony Blair has made this clear. Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, has made it clearer. Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, has acknowledged it. We know they differ in their views, but the line can be held without problem.

So the readiness — or unreadiness — is all. Are we ready to enter? No minister will do other than parrot the line: they have much to do, and the decision may not yet have been made. No one has any interest in dispelling the view that entry in the first wave, beginning January 1999, is other than a very long shot.

But a little wind is blowing in the opposite direction. It is worth looking at what straws are being blown by it.

The Government is at pains to be Euro-friendly. Blair will go to Nordwijk today to meet his fellow EU heads of government to be flattered and to flatter. He will tell them that Britain's signing of the social chapter does not mean that we will continue to import uncompetitive labour practices — but he will say it in a constructive fashion, as a friend within rather than an enemy without — and he will find some agreement, too. At the final meeting of the inter-governmental conference in Amsterdam next month, he may reach a deal with the others that allows Britain to keep control over its borders while the others agree to common control: he already has a better chance of doing this than his predecessor. Friendliness and style, have their limits. But they count for something.

Tony Blair's most significant appointment to the Government from outside of the ranks of Labour MPs was Sir David Simon, the former head of BP, now Minister for European Trade and spokesman on Treasury matters in the Lords. Simon is on the European wing of British business: in an essay published earlier this year by the Centre for European Reform, he wrote that "as members of the monetary union, we would have the opportunity to rebuild our competitive strength, to hone our competitiveness and to enter the next century with optimism grounded in reality — rather than in an uncertain mood steeped in nostalgia".

His former colleagues in the CBI are now being asked what they think about entering a monetary union. The exercise continues, but early indications are that they strongly favour it — and favour entry in the first wave. The TUC is already officially committed to early entry. It matters less: a senior official muttered to me earlier this week that it would be better if the unions opposed it, in which case the Government might join to show that it is independent of the unions. One can see his point, but he is wrong: the TUC's position will reassure old Labour, and old Labour is far from insignificant in the Government.

It now seems likely that monetary union will not merely go ahead, but will include almost everyone who wishes to be in. The decision by the Germans to revalue their gold reserves in order to meet the entry criteria may be creative accounting, but it is, it seems, and the Spanish, Germany can hardly argue for the exclusion of the Latins if it is prepared to unbend to such an extent. The indications are that it is coming round to accepting the inevitability of Italian and Spanish entry: if so, and if we were to remain outside, we would be left with perhaps only the Scandinavian states for company.

Reports of Gordon Brown's speech to the CBI on Tuesday were swamped by his earlier announcement about stripping the Bank of England of its regulatory authority: but it was a fascinating speech. He sought to redefine Britishness as fair, enterprising, and above all forward-looking and self-confident — in explicit contradiction to what he saw as the narrow insularity of the Thatcher and Major years. He underlined the necessity of Britain's commitment to Europe: "We are in for the long term: we are in to stay." Britain, he said, could not revert to being part of a free trade area: nor could it become a European Hong Kong. A decision on monetary union, "needs to be taken on the basis of intelligent, well-informed debate among all our people." He commended the CBI for conducting a consultation on EMU which, he knows, will recommend early entry.

Mr Brown is incomparably the most powerful minister in the land after Mr Blair. The early shape of the Government is two-plus-two: that is, Messrs Blair and Brown first, Robin Cook and Jack Straw as big players in the next circle, with Peter Mandelson constructing a new role and John Prescott set to prove himself.

The little breeze whispers in Mr Blair's ear "Do it now." Now, when the national mood is with you. Now, when the Conservatives are riven and squabbling. Now, when Britain's competitiveness and economic standing is so high. Now, when the monetary union is not an election issue — as it may prove to be if we wait for a second round.

Do it now! Write history in bold strokes while the hand is relatively free! It is a temptation. The traffic may not be able to bear it: the press has not been squared: the people are not prepared. It is a long shot, still. But it runs, still.

P.H.S.



DUTCH AUCTION

The Prime Minister should be wary at Noordwijk

Tony Blair will be warmly greeted and gently treated at Noordwijk today. He and his Government have done much to earn the warm greeting: the Prime Minister arrives at his first European summit bearing gifts which go well beyond the symbolic.

Gone, for a start, is Britain's Maastricht opt-out on the social chapter, opening up fresh prospects for EU labour legislation under the heading of "working conditions". Gone too are Tory hints of a "London ambush" next year, when Britain assumes the European Union presidency in the vital months when the decision on monetary union is taken. In its place is Robin Cook's promise, reinforced by the actions of Gordon Brown, to do all that Britain can to ensure a smooth EMU launch.

Britain's partners are also more optimistic about the prospects for concluding an Amsterdam treaty revising the Treaty of Rome next month — the subject of the Noordwijk summit. In Britain, the spin doctors may be justified in underlining just how tough the Government is going to be, on a common EU defence policy and on Britain's insistence on a "cast iron" exemption from plans to centralise control over the EU's external frontiers, immigration and asylum and to abolish internal border checks. On both these important fronts, Mr Cook's stance so far is the same as that of Malcolm Rifkind, his predecessor; but, lacking John Major's alibi of a backbench Commons in revolt, Mr Blair may find the bargaining endgame harder.

These arguments are unlikely to come to a head today, partly for lack of time and partly because Britain's partners are so delighted by the Blair appetisers that they will be careful not to pour vinegar all over the main course. But the Prime Minister will be pressed to endorse treaty language committing governments to make the EU a "zone of freedom, security and justice". With such vague aspirations do profound changes in

EU structures begin. The Dutch presidency draft commits governments to giving the Commission a role in the hitherto inter-governmental realm of justice and home affairs within three years, and to the abolition of all internal frontiers within five. Until the small print is agreed, Mr Blair should resist the grand phrase — above all since a Government that has been prepared to relinquish one British opt-out will be under continuing pressure to "renegotiate" any opt-out it may secure at Amsterdam.

Mr Blair's problem is that his colleagues may be unprepared to take no for the real answer. They have been powerfully struck by the novel spectacle of Britain actually being ahead of other countries in offering specific concessions in these negotiations — notably by announcing at this stage that it is ready for majority voting in EU councils on the environment, regional policy, research, anti-fraud measures and industrial policy. The Government is also expected to agree to the inclusion of employment promotion as a treaty-based EU objective, with surveillance of each EU state's performance on the lines of existing EU scrutiny of deficits.

The Government's strategy is to be flexible on what it sees as secondary questions, the better to argue its corner on matters of vital national interest — which apparently, and inexplicably, do not include a treaty amendment to end the scandal of quota-hopping by Spanish fishermen in British waters.

"Tough love" was also Mr Major's strategy when he first became Prime Minister. Mr Blair's luck could be better, for one reason: Helmut Kohl is resigned to compromise on virtually everything at Amsterdam, provided he is convinced that EMU is safe. Mr Blair has given him that assurance; but he has yet to explain why he is so keen to assist the chances of a project about which the British electorate has profound misgivings, and on which it has yet to be consulted in the promised referendum.

A TOUCH OF HUBRIS

Success has gone to the Chancellor's head

Six days after Labour won the election, Tony Blair summoned his MPs to Church House to tell them that he would not tolerate arrogance. "We are not the masters. We are the servants of the people," Labour, he said, approached the business of government with a "sense of humility". Just a fortnight later, that advice seems to have been forgotten by his closest colleague.

It is possible to understand the haste with which the Chancellor announced the independence of the Bank of England. Markets had to be reassured soon after a Labour victory. But for Gordon Brown to tell Eddie George only the day before he told the world that City regulation was to be revolutionised, with banking supervision taken away from the Bank of England, was a serious breach of common courtesy — particularly since the Governor had been informed that such a move would take place only after prolonged consultation. That Mr George considered resigning comes, therefore, as no surprise.

Indeed Mr Brown is very lucky that his peremptory behaviour did not force Mr George out. It is only because the Governor is such a conscientious public servant that he decided to stay in his post. He knew, as Mr Brown would surely have realised with a moment's thought, that his resignation would have wiped out the credibility gains that the granting of independence had achieved only the week before.

But to behave badly on the assumption that the victim can be relied upon to behave well is not just bad manners. It is a dangerous calculation for a politician to make. The Chancellor seems not quite to have grasped the difference between Oppo-

sition and Government. In Opposition, as Mr Blair pointed out on the steps of Downing Street, politicians can only say, not do. And their words have few real consequences. In Government, their actions have effects that must be thought through in advance. Whether or not Mr Brown likes Mr George, whether or not he intends to renew his tenure next year, the Chancellor can ill afford to lose the Governor now.

In Opposition, Mr Brown and his team clearly enjoyed using the weapon of surprise. They liked grabbing headlines with unexpected policy shifts, sometimes to the discomfort of colleagues who learnt about them no earlier than the press. Now they boast of "decisiveness" and "the smack of firm government". Having basked in the success of their early Bank of England announcement, they seem to have become carried away on a wave of machismo.

There were even suggestions from government sources yesterday that Mr George was "playing into our hands" by complaining. This, it was said, would make it easier to have him replaced. If the Government is unhappy with Mr George as Governor, it should say so publicly, not in a whispering campaign. If the Chancellor wants to sack his Governor, he should do so. If not, he must back him volubly.

Operational independence has to be accompanied by trust and a certain security of tenure. Otherwise, the independence either will lead to squabbles or it will be a sham. Mr Brown should try to mend fences with the Governor. He might even offer a private apology. In the spirit with which this Government was elected, a little modesty and humanity would not now go amiss.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Good University Guide offers a diverse menu

Life imitates not only art but sport. Not content with crushing the Dark Blues in the Boat Race for five years in succession, Cambridge have repeated the trick in *The Times* league table that we publish today. Nor in this case can Oxford claim they have been outflanked by creeping professionalism or unfair foreign imports. Although the battle between the ancient universities claims much of the attention, the overall results speak volumes about the present state of higher education in Britain.

Such an exercise was almost impossible a decade ago. League tables were little known and the idea little loved among academics. Since then they have proliferated both in number and sophistication. Our exercise this year includes no fewer than eight separate indicators of university performance. That will not, of course, prevent many outside the city of Cambridge claiming that the whole concept is still fundamentally flawed or that we have excluded some obscure but critical element which — coincidentally — would boost the standing of their own institution.

Guides are no more than that. But decisions concerning higher education have consequences for the taxpayer as well as personal cost for the individual concerned. Despite some recent shift in resources, Britain still spends a relatively high proportion of its education budget in this area. That in part is due to our continued willingness to allow prospective students a wide choice of loca-

tions for study. Other countries provide strong financial pressures to register at the most local establishment. In an era of mass higher education, and a vast array of universities, an informed choice is crucial.

A further advantage of information is the capacity it allows for comparison across time. Universities as a whole have seen more modernisation over the past five years than the previous fifty. That has placed considerable strain upon the entire system but produced rewards as well. Some institutions have seen a spectacular improvement in their research or teaching quality. In our own league table, Glasgow Caledonian, a new university, has climbed 28 places since last year while Keele, a rather more familiar institution, shot up 25 slots. Vigorous competition for students must be a major factor behind such dramatic results.

This can hardly be cause for complacency. The issue that should concern Baroness Blackstone, the new higher education minister, and Sir Ron Dearing as his committee conducts its review, is how Britain's universities would compare in an international survey. The evidence there remains mixed, although the results of the last research assessment exercise were encouraging. The global challenge is as important for Cambridge and Oxford as it is for less prestigious bodies. Light and Dark Blues may remain on top for the moment. But, unlike the Boat Race, neither at home nor abroad is the contest restricted to two participants.

Labour's promises on mental health

From the Chief Executive of SANE

Sir, It is disappointing that the new Labour manifesto contained no mention of mental health reform, and the Queen's Speech did not mention it. Yet in February 1996, Alan Milburn (then shadow health minister and now Minister of State at the Department of Health), after discussion with SANE, put forward in a press statement a four-point emergency plan on mental health.

This called for a halt to further psychiatric bed closures until appropriate community services have been developed; action to address staff shortages; immediate implementation of the "Care Programme Approach" in all parts of the country; and a change in mental health funding so that over time money goes where it is most needed. We welcomed this initiative and supported the call for immediate action. Nothing has happened.

Mr Milburn, at that time, said: "Mismanagement [of mental health policy] has caused a crisis of public confidence and shattered mental health staff morale. Time and again Government has been warned that radical changes are needed to mental health laws and policy."

The first step is to ensure that there is an effective moratorium on psychiatric bed closures so that the present disgraceful position does not become worse. In the last ten years almost 30,000 beds have been lost, with the result that desperately ill people are denied treatment and are left wandering the streets. One in seven people with serious mental illness takes their own life.

This charity, with others, has been calling for a complete revision of mental health legislation and services because they no longer serve the best interests of sufferers, their families and carers or the general public. The primary legislation, the Mental Health Act (1983), was drafted long before current bed shortages or community care.

We expect the Government to stand by the urgent action it promised on mental health reforms. Do not let mental health become lost again — make it top priority. Unless something is done tragically we hear about every day will continue.

Yours faithfully,
MARJORIE WALLACE,
Chief Executive,
SANE,
199-205 Old Marylebone Road, NW1,
May 19.

Govan election

From Chairman of the League of Overseas Pakistanis

Sir, In your leading article of May 19 you rightly state: "The allegations against Mr [Mohammed] Sarwar are, primarily, for the police to investigate... any case to answer must in law be heard in the courts not Parliament". However you also suggest that Mr Sarwar should be suspended by the Labour Party National Executive Committee.

Today's leading article goes further than merely suggesting suspension. You urge suspension, saying: "It is not good enough to leave investigations to the police." The Labour Party NEC can be trusted to deal with this matter in a befitting manner. If Mr Sarwar is found guilty by them and is suspended from the Parliamentary Labour Party, so be it. Right-thinking British Muslims will not feel that he is victim of what you describe as "Islamophobia".

However, trial by media and fixing of guilt even before police or the Labour Party have investigated the allegations would affront many British Muslims.

Yours faithfully,
Q. S. ANISUDDIN,
Chairman,
League of Overseas Pakistanis,
9a High Street,
Southall, Middlesex,
May 21.

Lunch that fits the bill

From Mr George Chowdhary-Best

Sir, I am no doctor but, as the holder of a degree in physiology, I find Dr Stuttaford's views on lunch (Body and Mind, May 15) highly questionable.

Do normal human beings in good health really need three meals a day? The case is unproved. Dr Stuttaford admits that people should ideally rest after meals so as to enable the digestion process to begin without placing too great a strain upon the heart; but he does not explain how in practice busy and active people can find the time to do so.

It may be true that women need to eat little and often, but men have not had time to evolve physiologically from being hunter-gatherers; and whilst fluid during the day is essential, solid food is not, and may be an obstacle to activity especially if it is of the school-meal type, as the doctor recommends.

Moreover, it is not in practice possible to limit luncheon in the manner he proposes; such things do tend to go on, especially if a journalist is entertaining and footing the bill. My advice to ministers is to heed the remark of a former Lord Lucas: "Anyone who eats more than one meal a day is digging his grave with his teeth."

Yours faithfully,
G. CHOWDHARY-BEST,
47 Walpole Street, SW3,
May 15.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Anomalies in devolution proposals

From Captain J. G. Ferrie, RN

Sir, The new Government now aims to press ahead with its plans for a referendum on Scottish devolution. I believe that the Cabinet should reconsider its decision that only residents should be permitted to vote in that referendum.

I am a Scot who left home to join a United Kingdom public service and have subsequently only had one appointment in Scotland. Should not I, although now resident in England, be more entitled to vote than any English or Welsh person temporarily resident in Scotland, perhaps at the behest of an employer?

If identifying and enfranchising the Scots outside Scotland but still within the United Kingdom is too difficult for those planning the referendum, the Government might arrange to seek the views of the entire United Kingdom population. The result might well prove instructive.

Yours faithfully,
J. G. FERRIE,
1 Barnfield Way,
Bathaston, Bath, Somerset,
May 20.

From Mr John K. Laurence

Sir, Like the Prime Minister, I am of Scottish descent and attended a Scottish fee-paying public school in Edinburgh. And like him I have earned my living in England. Presumably neither of us will have a vote for the new Scottish parliament.

There are many people of English parentage, educated in England, but earning their living in Scotland. Presumably they will have a vote for the Scottish parliament as well as for the British Parliament. Surely all this appears ludicrous.

Why do we not continue the present system which has lasted satisfactorily for 300 years, and where we all, Scots and English, vote for the British Parliament?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN LAURENCE,
Cardross House, Church Road,
Ham Common, Richmond, Surrey,
May 21.

From Mr T. R. H. Sowler

Sir, When the tower around which this house has evolved was built at the end of the 15th century, the site selected was a cold, north-facing slope, but it was south of the Tyne and so less susceptible to the endemic risks of the Scots. During the ensuing century the castellans of this and neighbouring fastnesses had to maintain a regular night watch on the Tyne fords, although it is fair to say that the English were as much on the offensive as the defensive.

With the succession in 1603 of the Scottish King James VI as James I of

England these precautions became unnecessary. By the time of the disorders of 1715 and 1745 many Northumbrians favoured the Jacobite cause and the national English/Scottish distinction had greatly diminished.

Until recently, the Queen's Own Yeomanry (my territorial regiment) included both Ayrshire and Northumberland squadrons. They operated well together and "Jocks v Geordies" rivalry was friendly.

Labour proposals for devolution run contrary to the historical advances of the past 400 years.

Yours faithfully,
T. R. H. SOWLER,
Unthank Hall,
Halwistle, Northumberland,
May 20.

From Mr William M. Ballantine

Sir, We have heard much from new Labour recently about fairness, but I wonder if we will be seeing fairness in the forthcoming devolution referendum in Scotland?

What if, as many here fear, indifference wins; eg, what if 500,000 people vote yes, 499,999 vote no and 2 million people don't vote — will this be taken as the will of the Scottish people? As in the last devolution referendum in 1979, when 40 per cent of the entire electorate had to vote yes to ensure success, a safety net is needed to ensure a majority of the people really do wish to go down this road.

If, as Labour and others claim, we Scots really are in favour of this, then they have nothing to fear.

Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM M. BALLANTINE,
47 The Quarryknoves,
Dean Road, Bonness, West Lothian,
May 16.

From Mr Bruce Leeming

Sir, Magnus Linklater ("Scotland deserves a bonnier House", May 17) is undoubtedly correct to call for a modern purpose-built home for the Scottish parliament. However, the debating chamber and associated offices of the old Royal High School will be quite good enough for the mere talking-shop presently proposed for the nation.

But if the devolved arrangements soon to be put in place simply constitute a necessary stepping stone to a properly sovereign Scottish parliament, then the architectural competition had better be organised without delay.

The unworkability of "parish council" government, West Lothian anomalies and all, will soon become apparent.

Yours faithfully,
BRUCE LEEMING,
29 India Street, Edinburgh,
May 20.

'Rights' and the law

From Mr L. L. Blake

Sir, John Wadham, Director of Liberty, whose letter (May 14) advocates incorporation into our law of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (to give it its full title) shows a touching faith in its efficacy. In fact it will be a feast for lawyers and malcontents.

Why do we need to rely on rights which are divisive and restrictive, when we have the precious heritage of common law which is based on duties? We should be wary of high-sounding charters which refer to "freedoms" in the plural, which means, in effect, that there will be permissible freedoms in some areas but not in others. Only the State will decide.

Mr Wadham wants the convention to be supplemented by "new rights in a domestic Bill of Rights". So-called "natural" rights are endless. Jeremy Bentham once described them as "nonsense upon stilts" — and so they are.

Yours truly,
L. L. BLAKE,
271 Lonsdale Road, SW13,
May 14.

Fiji and the Crown

From Mr Ganesh Lal

Sir, Your report of May 12, "Fiji seeks to reforge link to the Crown", that Fiji is negotiating for readmission to the Commonwealth, and the alleged delight with which the Queen and the Prince of Wales have welcomed this, beggars belief.

Gradually and unobtrusively Fiji is being welcomed back into the Commonwealth in spite of the disgraceful behaviour of that country over the past ten years.

The 1987 coup overthrew a legitimately elected government and in 1990 a new constitution was promulgated giving only indigenous Fijians the right to be Prime Minister and President and guaranteeing a majority of seats to them in the House of Representatives.

The international community helped to get rid of apartheid in South Africa. It must do the same in Fiji or be guilty of practising double standards. Human rights, like human suffering, are indivisible.

I am, yours sincerely,
GANESH LAL,
The Common Room,
Middle Temple, EC4,
May 12.

Assisted places

From Councillor Mrs Ann Cairns

Sir, It was interesting to read that Mr Tim Haynes, headmaster of Monmouth School, considers that children should be educated alongside people from all backgrounds to learn tolerance and how to work together (report, May 19).

Our two sons, both now engineering graduates of the University of Cambridge, have always appreciated their years at a school where pupils from all backgrounds were and are still able to mix academically and socially. However, they did not occupy assisted places at an independent school and my husband and I did not pay for this privileged schooling. They both attended our nearest school — the local comprehensive.

Yours sincerely,
ANN CAIRNS (Chair of Governors,
Blakeney School),
21 Countisbury Road,
Norton, Stockton on Tees,
May 19.

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Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

Channel Tunnel fire precautions

From Mr Noel Falconer

Sir, Mr Stefan Tietz argues, in relation to safety on the Channel Tunnel freight shuttles (letter, May 20), that "calls... for expensive changes to the open-sided rolling stock require better perspective". They rather require the most urgent investigation.

Old flying films often show a heroic pilot diving to blow out a fire. This works by blasting the flames back faster than they can burn forward, so the source of ignition falls away as-
torm.

It's heroic because, when it doesn't work, the extra airflow blasts the blaze into a blowtorch, with catastrophic consequences. And it doesn't work when there's a sheltered area where a fire can keep on burning, and keep on reigniting combustible material.

The open laticework of the Channel freight shuttles encourages the formation of such areas: that a conflagration did occur supports this. There would seem to be a *prima facie* case that they are unwarrantably unsafe.

Yours sincerely,
NOEL FALCONER,
223 Bramhall Moor Lane,
Hazel Grove, Stockport,
May 20.

From Professor Viscount Samuel

Sir, A solution to the problem of fires on the Eurotunnel trains might be the covering of each laticeworked freight wagon with a jacket or "tarpaulin" made of Kevlar. This is an aramid polymer fibre used for the manufacture of protective clothing for firemen and tank crews. This cloth is flexible, fairly light, and almost indestructible by fire.

I understand it was reported that a restriction on weight was the main reason for the open design of the wagons used for lorries. Aramid "curtains" would reduce the amount of oxygen available to a burning lorry, thereby containing the spread of the fire and, at the same time, would help to prevent the escape of smoke into the tunnels.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID SAMUEL,
Weizman Institute of Science,
Department of Environmental
Sciences and Energy Research,
76100 Rehovot, Israel,
May 21.

Start at the top

From Mr John Reade

Sir, Whilst seeking suitable work through your recruitment supplement ("Management plus") this morning I was astounded to learn from the article on board meetings of a woman who had managed to land (please excuse the pun) a directorship with British Airways where she went into her first board meeting "without having a clue what to do", and that she was, furthermore, "sitting on eight boards" with "no training in her responsibilities".

Can it be that her promotion at BA, and subsequent move to the managing directorship of Bupa, were made because she was not detained by over-qualification?

I wonder if those responsible for her promotion could contact me as soon as possible so I can employ them to find me a job. Unless of course, in the meantime, one of your readers has a vacant directorship — any position, I'm not greedy — just looking for a job.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN READE,
7 Tees Road,
Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex,
May 15.

Waiting for the bus

From Miss G. H. Threlfall

Sir, Professor Robert Stanton's decision to sue the company that failed to produce his bus on time (report and leading article, May 20) brought to mind a delightful disclaimer seen on the timetable at a bus stop some years ago. The small print read:

The... Bus Company does not guarantee to operate buses in accordance with this timetable, or at all.

Yours, etc,
G. H. THRELFALL,
38a Rossiter Road, SW12.

From Dr G. Van Praagh

Sir, When I was an education student we were told: "Never run after a bus. A woman or an educational theory — there'll be another in a few minutes." I hope Professor Stanton's activities will restore the first as good advice, young men already act on the second. Ministers of Education should take note of this third.

Yours faithfully,
GORDON VAN PRAAGH,
25 Blackwater Lane, Crawley, Sussex,
May 20.

Chastening thought

From Mr Manthos Kallios

Sir, Your Science Editor reports (May 22) evidence to suggest that males "... live longer if the sexual drive is removed".

Maybe it just feels that way.

Yours faithfully,
M. P. KALLIOS,
Mollands,
Hillwood Grove, Brentwood, Essex,
May 22.

OBITUARIES

DR NOEL BROWNE

Dr Noel Browne, former Minister of Health and socialist politician in Ireland, died in Galway yesterday aged 81. He was born in Waterford on December 20, 1915.

As Minister for Health in the Irish Government formed in 1948, Dr Noel Browne was credited with eliminating the deadly scourge of tuberculosis which had decimated generations of young Irish people.

In 1951 he sought to introduce a free maternity service. The Irish bishops, alarmed by the prospect of socialised medicine, opposed the scheme on the grounds that it was not means-tested and was therefore contrary to Catholic social teaching. When Browne refused to alter it, despite being asked to do so by his colleagues, he was told to resign by his party leader Sean MacBride.

Although he remained in politics as a hardline socialist for many years, he never held office again. But he remained an icon for those who denounced Irish society as socially unjust and deplored the influence of the Roman Catholic Church.

Noel Browne's own background was a strange blend of deprivation and privilege. Both his father, who had been an inspector with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and his mother died from tuberculosis when he was a child and the penniless family was scattered.

His elder sister took care of him and the woman who employed her as a manager of a holiday home for children in the South of England had the young Noel enrolled as a pupil in a Catholic preparatory school called St Anthony's in Eastbourne.

From there he won a scholarship to Beaumont, the Jesuit public school near Windsor, where he became friendly with Neville Chance, who was the son of the late Sir Arthur Chance, the last King's surgeon in Ireland.

It was Lady Chance, who paid Browne's fees as a medical student at Trinity College Dublin. She was a person of considerable wealth (her father was William Martin Murphy, the leader of the Dublin employers who put down the general strike of 1913. As such he was a hate-figure among Labour people in Ireland).

After he qualified as a doctor, Browne contracted tuberculosis himself and was treated at a hospital in England. Later, during the war years, he worked as a doctor in various English sanatoriums. He continued to specialise in tuberculosis on his return to Ireland in 1946.



Contact made with a patient led him into a campaign for political action to deal with the disease. He joined the Clann na Poblachta party which had been founded by Sean MacBride, a barrister and former Chief of Staff of the IRA.

Browne was elected to the Dail in 1948, defeating by only a few votes the Labour candidate Eleanor Butler, who subsequently became Countess of Wicklow. After the election a coalition Government was formed out of a diverse collection of parties, the only bond between which was opposition to Eamon de Valera, who had by then been in office as head of government for 16 years.

Browne became Minister for Health on his first day in the Dail. He was the

first public schoolboy and the first Trinity graduate to serve in an Irish government.

The campaign he waged to eradicate tuberculosis won acclaim. He built numerous sanatoriums out of funds accumulated from the proceeds of the Irish Hospitals Sweepstakes run on major racing events such as the Grand National.

This was popular, but there were those who thought it was somewhat profligate at a time when drugs such as streptomycin were becoming available — drugs which were to bring the great tuberculosis epidemic to an end within a few years.

Browne was undiplomatic in his dealings with the medical profession and got rid of his own departmental

legal adviser, who was the real author of the mother and child scheme he proposed in 1951.

In the context of the Ireland of that day — where most hospitals ran on the voluntary work of religious orders — it was simply not practical politics to attempt to disregard the views of the Catholic hierarchy. That he should have broken with them over the issue of whether those who were able to pay should receive a free service was in itself evidence of a political naivety and lack of sense of proportion that were as characteristic of the man as were the hatred of injustice and idealism that inspired him.

Although Browne continued to be elected to the Dail, where he represented one of Dublin's more affluent constituencies, he never came near to holding office again. He was at different times a member of four other political parties, but he was always an uneasy colleague, slow to compromise, quick to elevate disagreements into points of principle, and ever ready to impugn the motives of those who did not agree with him.

He was powerful in denunciation, and his speeches, which began with the audience straining to hear him, often ended in a voice that bordered on the strident. He remained too far removed from the mainstream of Irish opinion even when the role of the Church came under increasing suspicion. He had a withering contempt for much Nationalist ideology, which he felt had been used as an opium for the people who needed social justice and emancipation from a repressive Church.

Browne was a loner, though not without considerable social charm at a personal level.

He remained a doctor, though he did not carry on a private practice, and he changed his specialty from tuberculosis to psychiatry. This confirmed him in his hostile attitude to the Church, as he saw the harm that could be done in individual lives by the more repressive Catholic teaching, especially on sexual matters.

After he finally left politics in 1982 he retired to live in the vast emptiness of Connemara on the West Coast. In 1986 he published his memoirs *Against the Tide*; this proved a powerfully written book. Among other things, it contained a heart-rending account of his tragic childhood, which gave an insight into the reasons for his bitterness towards those who perpetrated injustice. But there was something less appealing in the unkind and somewhat self-righteous manner in which he denounced other politicians.

Noel Browne is survived by his wife Phyllis, and two daughters.

PETER SNAPE

Peter Snape, OBE, headmaster and administrator, died on April 30 aged 71. He was born on June 4, 1925.



PETER SNAPE was an effective and inspiring headmaster who went on to become a distinguished educational administrator. As head of the King Edward VI School in Tames for almost twenty years from 1964, he was a highly successful pioneer of comprehensive education, and his school came to exemplify all that was good in the new system.

Later, as general secretary in the 1980s of both the Secondary Heads' Association (representing state schools) and the Headmasters' Conference (which draws its members from the independent sector), he had a hand in holding together the two worlds of state and independent secondary education in a turbulent period when they might easily have drifted apart. He also supported and advised the heads of state secondary schools during those years of unprecedented disruption in their schools.

Thomas Peter Snape came from a modest home in Yorkshire. He was educated at Cockburn High School in Leeds and at Eton College, Oxford, where he read English. After teaching in a variety of grammar and comprehensive schools between 1950 and 1960, he was appointed headmaster of Settle High School in 1960.

His greatest school achievement began in 1964, when he became Headmaster of King Edward VI Grammar School in Tames. Five years later the grammar school was transformed into the much larger King Edward VI Comprehensive School, on a new site on the edge of the town. Not only did Snape ensure that the transition was smoothly accomplished, but he saw the new school go on to become a highly successful example of comprehensive education.

Snape reigned at King Edward's — if reigned is not too grand a word for his splendidly unbuttoned style of headmastering — with great success until 1983, inspiring,

cajoling and enabling his expanding staff to develop a tradition of hard work and an unbounded enthusiasm for the new school they were together creating.

From 1983 to 1988 Snape was general secretary of the Secondary Heads' Association and of the Headmasters' Conference. It was at this period that his compassion and diplomacy were given full rein. The heads of state secondary schools were being ground between the upper and nether millstones of the local authorities and rebellious teaching staff. Demonstrations, boycotts and strikes were rife. Snape stiffened the heads' resolve and gave them moral support at a cost to himself of endless phone calls, long train journeys and voluminous correspondence. Those who worked with him during this time bear witness to his patience, wit and good humour under pressure. On his retirement in 1988 he was appointed OBE.

Snape held a Leverhulme Research Fellowship in the United States in 1970, and was a member of the consultative committee of the Assessment of Performance Unit, 1975-84, and of the Teachers' Education Accreditation Council 1984-86. He was a Justice of the Peace in Devon from 1975. He published a book called *Ten Sites in Tames* in 1990 and also contributed to learned journals.

The years of retirement were not entirely easy. Snape and his wife Anne had a home in Tames and a flat in London, and they moved regularly between them. In 1994, however, they were struck by the death of their only son, Adam.

Moreover, Snape's ill-health made it difficult for him to read for any length of time. This was irksome, for books had always given him particular pleasure. But he never lost his puckish sense of humour.

Peter Snape is survived by his wife and their three daughters.

GIUSEPPE DE SANTIS

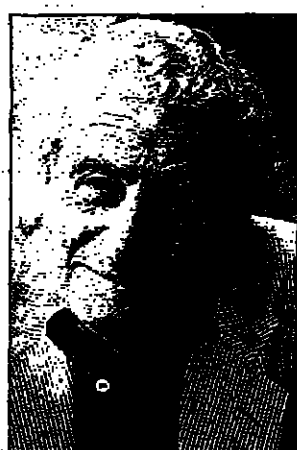
Giuseppe De Santis, Italian film director, died on May 16 aged 80. He was born on February 11, 1917.

ALTHOUGH banned by the US Legion of Decency, the film *Riso Amaro* (Bitter Rice) was an international success, establishing its director Giuseppe De Santis as one of the key figures of the Italian neo-realist movement.

A vehement anti-fascist, committed to Marxist principles, De Santis used his movies to communicate a social message. His *Riso Amaro* dealt with the exploitation of girls hired seasonally as rice-picking labourers on the marshes of the Upper Po. He cast the actor Silvana Mangano — who had been the 1946 Miss Rome — in a

prominent role, transforming her overnight into a star. Such concessions to popular taste, however, were criticised by many of his leftist colleagues, and De Santis never achieved the renown of such directors as Roberto Rossellini or Vittorio De Sica.

Born and brought up in Fondi, Italy, Giuseppe De Santis professed, even in his childhood, to have had a "kind of mistrust of rich kids" which made him seek out the company of the local tradesmen's children. Instead, he studied philosophy at Rome's Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, where he acquainted himself with Marxist theories (though, officially, the school was subject to Fascist control) and attended screenings of the great Soviet film makers. He was vociferously hostile to



Fascism and traditional Italian cinema. In 1940 De Santis was working as a reviewer for the magazine *Cinema* (edited by Benito Mussolini's son

Vittorio), when he met Luchino Visconti and the two, who shared many of the same ideas, decided to film James Cain's novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice* and adapt it to "the true reality of our country". De Santis and a former fellow student Mario Alicata walked themselves up in Visconti's home during the winter of 1941-42 writing the script for the film *Ossessione*, which Visconti directed. It heralded the beginning of what was later to be called neo-realism.

De Santis made his directorial debut in 1945 with a documentary celebrating the fall of Fascism. Its lyrical imagery owed much to Eisenstein. The first feature film he directed was *Coccia Tragica* (The Tragic Hunt, 1947) — a tale of confusion of identities

which reflected the chaos of postwar Italy and which, discreetly successful, was to establish itself as a key film of the neo-realist movement.

On the strength of it De Santis was signed up by Lux, a large Italian film company of the time, and it was with them that he made *Riso Amaro* in 1949. He followed this with two films *Non C'è Pace tra gli Ulivi* (Under the Olive Tree, 1950) and *Roma Ora è Roma* (11 o'clock, 1952). All were successful — praised for their promotion of social reform but criticised for their concessions to commercialism.

Yet, with his five following films, De Santis's reputation waned, though his continued loyalty to the Communist cause (even after the Soviet Union had invaded Hungary) helped him to find financing for such projects as his 1957 *La strada lunga un anno* (The Road That Lasted a Year), a film applauding the solidarity of unpaid workers in Yugoslavia. In 1964 he filmed in Russia a *Italiani brava gente*, a movie about an Italian regiment on the Eastern front.

His last movie — *Un'aprezzata professionista* (An Appreciated Professional with an Unlikely Future) — was made in 1972. Many considered it his worst. Nonetheless, in 1995, De Santis received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Berlin Film Festival, where he was acclaimed not only for his contribution to Italian cinema, but also for his professional integrity.

De Santis married Giovanna Valeri in 1943.



A scene from De Santis's *Bitter Rice*, with Silvana Mangano (centre)

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THE POISON GAS DISASTER

ELEVEN DEATHS.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

BERLIN, May 22
Four of the more seriously affected patients poisoned by the escape of phosgene gas at Hamburg on Sunday have died since yesterday. This brings the total number of deaths up to 11. There remain some 250 persons under treatment and inhabitants of the stricken area have been alarmed to learn that cases at first slight have become more serious, and that one or two persons who for more than a day had apparently remained in perfect health, have had to be removed to hospital today. This characteristic accompaniment of gas poisoning has, according to reports received in Berlin, given the scene of the disaster something of the appearance of a plague-stricken area, where men and women, haggard from sleeplessness, walk about haunted by the fear that they will yet be victims of the invisible peril.

ON THIS DAY

May 23, 1928

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Although the manufacture of a poison gas for military purposes was prohibited, phosgene production was permitted for the manufacture of dyestuffs and in other industrial processes.

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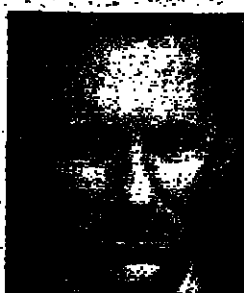
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THE TIMES

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says we will pay for
Brown's blunders
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Testing time when
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SPORT

Ince tempted to
extend his
stay in Milan
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AND
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BUSINESS EDITOR *Patience Wheatcroft*

FRIDAY MAY 23 1997

Brown's treatment of Governor prompts anger in City



George: considered resigning

By JILL SHERMAN
AND ROBERT MILLER

SENIOR City bankers are furious at the way the Governor of the Bank of England has been treated by the new Government and are insisting that he should not be forced to resign.

The row erupted this week when it became clear that Eddie George, the Governor, was "very angry" at the way in which he was told only 24 hours before the Chancellor announced on Tuesday that he would transfer the supervision of UK banks from the Bank to the beefed-up Securities and Investments Board.

Mr George was assured in a private

letter from Mr Brown two weeks ago that changes to bank supervision would not happen immediately and that there would be full consultation beforehand. Mr George then briefed senior Bank directors and reassured the 425 staff working in the supervision department.

Mr George has not denied that he considered resigning, but added that such thoughts "went away very quickly". However, a senior Minister is believed to want the Governor replaced, and is reported to have said he has "played into our hands".

Lord Alexander of Weedon, chairman of NatWest Bank group, said: "I

think Eddie George has been an excellent Governor and the fact that the Bank has been granted operational independence is a reflection of his skills. His reputation among international central banks is as a serious professional banker."

"I can see no reason whatsoever why his term should be brought prematurely to an end and very solid reasons why he should stay on for another term. If he were to go, it would create uncertainty as to whether the Government has the appropriate judgment."

Another senior banker said: "If Mr George were not such a splendid public servant he would have re-

signed on Monday. To expect someone to behave well when you are behaving badly is the height of ill manners."

Peter Birch, chief executive of Abbey National, said: "Eddie George is an outstanding Governor and he will just take a little time to adapt to the massive changes that were sprung on him without warning."

The Treasury yesterday dismissed reports that Gavin Davies, chief economist at Goldman Sachs, is set to become the next Governor of the Bank of England.

Mr Davies, a close friend of both Mr Brown and Tony Blair, had been tipped to become one of the two new

deputies at the Bank and a front-runner to succeed Mr George whose contract expires next June. But Mr Davies is rumoured to have told Gordon Brown that he would only accept the job as deputy if he received a commitment that he would replace Mr George.

Treasury sources were yesterday playing down suggestions that Mr Davies will be one of the two new deputies. They argued that the decision did not have to be taken until the Bank of England Bill had reached the statute books.

Commentary, page 27
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BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES	
FTSE 100	4651.8 (+9.8)
Yield	3.32%
FTSE All share	2212.7 (+3.49)
Nikkei	19877.59 (+35.41)
New York	
Dow Jones	7262.25 (-20.44)
S&P Composite	836.93 (-2.24)

US RATE	
Federal Funds	5 1/4% (5 1/4%)
Long Bond	95 1/4% (95 1/4%)
Yield	6.99% (6.96%)

LONDON MONEY	
3-month Interbank	6 1/4% (6 1/4%)
Life long gilt future (June)	111% (112 1/2%)

STERLING	
New York	1.6283* (1.6455)
London	
\$	1.6345 (1.6487)
DM	2.7677 (2.7945)
FF	9.3184 (9.4116)
Sfr	2.3054 (2.3290)
Yen	188.49 (188.34)
S Index	58.4 (58.1)

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London	
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S Index	58.4 (58.1)

NORTH SEA OIL	
Brent 15-day (Aug)	\$20.30 (\$20.15)

Going east

PowerGen, Britain's second biggest generator, is pumping £421 million into Far Eastern power projects but still wants to pick for a regional electricity company in the UK.

However, the company remained quiet on the impending windfall tax. Page 26, Tempus 28

Unsporting

Heavy spending by parents on branded sportswear for older children is eating into the money available for clothes for the under-fives.

Storehouse said. Page 27

Beckett overrules OFT on railway franchises

By FRASER NELSON AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

MARGARET BECKETT, President of the Board of Trade, yesterday overruled John Bridgeman, Director-General of Fair Trading, and referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission the award of two train franchises to National Express, the largest railway operator.

It was the first time for six years a deal has been referred to the MMC against the director-general's advice. A spokeswoman for Mr Bridgeman said that there was no question of him resigning.

Mr Bridgeman ruled that the award of ScotRail and Central Trains to National Express, which receives £525 million a year in subsidy, did not pose a serious competitive threat. The director-general, who waived through the Central Trains franchise, suggested National Express should divest its Scottish Citylink bus network to avoid a referral. The service is Scotland's largest coach network.

In the West Midlands, where Central Trains runs National Express owns Travel West Midlands - which commands 70 per cent of the bus routes in the region.

The move astonished the City, who had considered the National Express deals beyond jurisdiction. Shares of National Express fell by 28 p.p. to 490 p.p. as did shares of every other rail operating companies, wiping £97 million from the value of the sector.

Mrs Beckett has the power to refer four other franchises: North London Railways, also

run by National Express; North West Regional Railways, jointly run by FirstBus Regional Railways North East, run by MTL; and West Coast Railways, which is being run by Virgin.

Colin Child, finance director of National Express, said he was astonished by the news, which came as the company announced it was spending £39 million on 13 new train sets for its Midland Mainline franchise. Much of this work goes to Adtranz, which is located in Mrs Beckett's Derby constituency.

Mr Child said: "There is not one shred of evidence to suggest that we have operated any of our networks against the public interest. We have reduced prices and improved services."

The group's five rail companies will receive state subsidies of £525 million this year, making National Express the most heavily subsidised company since the days of nationalisation.

Mrs Beckett's decision reflects concern over the control of the privatised rail network at a time when Labour is preparing tougher regulation of railway franchises.

Yesterday Glenda Jackson, the Transport Minister, said in a Commons written reply that John O'Brien, the rail franchising director, is to review his enforcement powers. She said: "We believe that the tools presently available to regulators are inadequate and have already begun to seek ways of strengthening them in the interests of passengers."

Although Government sources insisted that Mrs Beckett was not attempting to influence the MMC, they conceded that her move indicated "real concerns" about a company running coach and rail services in the same area.

However, they insisted that the move did not mark the beginning of a more general trend to refer other franchises to the MMC.

The move came as John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for transport, has pressed the rail regulators to tighten their own control both of train-operating companies and of Railtrack, the company in charge of track and stations.

Mr Prescott is preparing a White Paper on regulation in advance of planned legislation likely to be introduced next year.



Beckett: real concern over control of privatised network



Bridgeman: not resigning

Commentary, page 27

Titan plans return to UK through Internet

By ROBERT MILLER

TITAN, the controversial and illegal money-making scheme that took more than £17 million from 12,000 investors last year is poised to return to the UK.

Inquiries by *The Times* have established that Titan III has set up an operation at Aalsmeer in The Netherlands and plans to use the Internet to contact British investors. It is understood that investigators at the Department of Trade and Industry have been alerted to the new scheme.

A spokeswoman for the DTI said last night: "I cannot confirm or deny that we are investigating Titan III although if anyone has any information about this we would ask them to forward it to our investigations department."

A letter to former members who last year signed up to the Titan Business Club and a US version, Titan Interna-

tional LLC, before they were closed down, says: "The Stalinist approach of the DTI has denied you the opportunity as a member of one or other of these entities to earn the commission that you are entitled to."

Under the old Titan schemes members paid between £2,500 and £3,000 to join and recouped their fee by recruiting others and earning a commission on each new member.

Patrick Minford, the economist and former member of the Treasury's panel of "wise men", was retained as an adviser to the old Titan schemes. He said yesterday that he had "absolutely no links" with the planned new scheme.

Web Guide, a Dutch company which sets up web sites on the Internet for clients, confirmed that Titan had registered at the request of a Mrs Humphreys.

Eurotunnel boost over freight go-ahead

By JASON NISSE

EUROTUNNEL received a boost to its plans to restructure £2.2 billion of debts when the Anglo-French Inter-Governmental Commission said that it would allow freight services to resume through the Channel Tunnel from the middle of next month. Services have been suspended since the tunnel fire last November.

The IGC, a joint body that administers the tunnel, said Eurotunnel would have to conduct a number of safety checks set out in a report from the joint safety committee last week. If these cleared Eurotunnel, the Le Shuttle freight service could start again on June 15, a month later than Eurotunnel had originally hoped.

The safety committee criticised Eurotunnel on 36 points but said that it could operate freight services in open

carriages with covering lattices. The clearance is essential to Eurotunnel, which needs to get traffic and revenue back up to pre-fire levels to meet the conditions of its deal with banks to cut £2.2 billion from its debts of £8.7 billion.

The refinancing deal has been passed by a steering group of bankers but only goes before shareholders on July 10. The meeting, in Paris, is expected to be difficult for Eurotunnel with at least two French shareholder groups saying they might oppose the refinancing.

Eurotunnel is also pressing the British and French Governments for an extension to the franchise to operate the tunnel, which has 65 years to run. Robert Malpas, Eurotunnel's joint chairman, said that extending the franchise might persuade more shareholders to vote in favour of the deal.

Really Useful chief deemed no longer useful

By JON ASHWORTH

ANDREW Lloyd Webber, the millionaire composer of award-winning musicals such as *Cats* and *Phantom of the Opera*, has fired his long-time financial adviser and confidante in a row over business strategy. Patrick McKenna, chairman and chief executive of The Really Useful Group,

which looks after Lloyd Webber productions worldwide, was ousted earlier this week. Bill Taylor, the chief financial officer, has been made acting chief executive until a more permanent successor is appointed. Lord Lloyd-Webber is said to be keeping a "watching brief" on developments.

Mr McKenna, 40, was for-

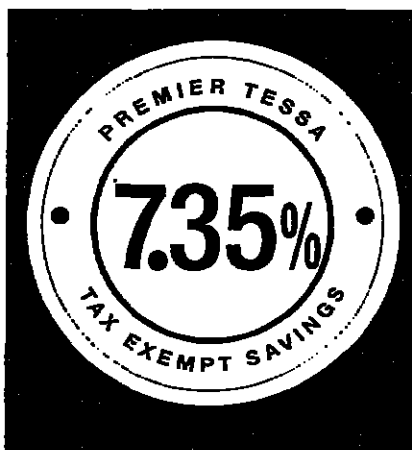
merly head of media and entertainment at Deloitte & Touche, the accountant, where he looked after the tax affairs of Annie Lennox, Phil Collins and Sir Cliff Richard. An adviser to Lord Lloyd-Webber since the late 1970s, he was hired full-time in 1990, when Really Useful was taken private after an unsuccessful stint on the stock market.

Mr McKenna was paid more than £7 million in 1994, and is thought to have earned £20 million in the past five years. Signs of a rift emerged in March, when Lord Lloyd-Webber hired John Reid, long-time adviser to Elton John, as his personal business manager. Mr McKenna, who had ambitious plans for Really Useful, including a leisure

complex in Las Vegas, was given until the end of April to come up with a workable business plan.

Mr McKenna was unavailable for comment yesterday. The company issued a statement, saying: "We are happy that Really Useful is in the safe hands of Bill Taylor until we are in a position to announce our new CEO."

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PowerGen spends £421m on stakes in two Far East plants

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

POWERGEN, the country's second-biggest generator, yesterday pumped £421 million into Far Eastern power projects but said that it could still pitch for a regional electricity company in the UK.

The company, which kept silent on the impending windfall tax, is eager to set in place a rounded strategy in energy, with involvement at every stage in the process. Last year it was blocked from buying Midlands Electricity when the Government overturned a Monopolies and Mergers Commission recommendation.

Ed Wallis, executive chairman, said PowerGen would look "very seriously" at buying a regional company if conditions allowed. It is thought that the Government may look more favourably on allowing generators to buy regional companies in the spirit of supporting companies that could become national champions. Only Southern Electric, which had been targeted by National Power, remains independent but American owners of other regional businesses are rumoured to want to re-sell.

PowerGen's new overseas investments are a 40 per cent stake in an Indonesian coal-fired power station, at a cost of £159 million, and a 30 per cent interest, costing £262 million, in a coal plant in Thailand. Deryk King, managing director, said the company aims to deliver £100 million in operating profits from international operations by 2001.

The generator is under pressure to grow business outside the UK as its domestic market share falls. PowerGen has 21.6 per cent of the electricity market after it was forced to

sell power stations to promote competition. That share is set to slip further as more independent power plants start production. But Mr Wallis said, after talks with the regulator, that he did not believe the generator faced further enforced sales, in spite of a recommendation by the Trade and Industry Committee that competition in generation should be scrutinised.

PowerGen, whose windfall tax submission to the Treasury is believed to echo National Power's argument that taxpayers have enjoyed bene-

fits from the two-stage sale of the generators, refused to say whether it would fight a tough tax through the courts.

For the year to March 31, PowerGen had a £69 million gain on the sale of its stake in Midlands Electricity but also took a £98 million accelerated depreciation charge on some of its stations. Pre-tax profits, before exceptional items, rose 2 per cent to £575 million.

The final dividend, due July 31, was set at 17.4p, making a total of 25.2p, up 19 per cent.

Tempos, page 28

Pattullo attacks regional tax for Scotland

BY JASON NISSE

ONE of Scotland's most senior bankers has launched a savage attack on Labour plans to give tax-raising powers to any future Edinburgh parliament.

Sir Bruce Pattullo, Governor of the Bank of Scotland, said in his bank's annual report that Scottish business would be disadvantaged if tax was raised from Edinburgh.

"Any form of additional regional tax can only handicap Scottish business and commerce and discourage vital investment by UK and overseas companies," wrote Sir Bruce. "The entire Scottish electorate will need to think very seriously about the risk of adverse consequences from any such tax."

The attack, which the Bank said reflected the policy of Scotland's second-largest bank, comes ahead of the passage through Parliament early next month of the bill to allow a referendum on the devolution plans. Any referendum is expected to be in the autumn. Sir Bruce's comments follow other attacks from Scottish business leaders, notably Brian Stewart of Scottish Courage, who said that a higher tax rate could prevent Scottish firms from hiring top staff and scare off investment north of the border.

However, Labour had thought it has won the support of the Scottish financial community, with firms including Standard Life and Scottish Widows being mentioned as supporters of devolution during the election campaign. Many of the Scottish financial companies, including Bank of Scotland, are headquartered within the constituency of Alastair Darling, Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

Sir Bruce also questioned Labour's ability to collect the tax - expected to add up to 3p in the pound to income tax rates. He said the proposal was controversial and that "many serious commercial, administrative and motivational problems remain hidden".

He suggested that Labour may turn to a sales tax, something which has been rejected by Henry McLeish, the Scottish Office Minister.

Insurance warning for motorists

THE Department of Trade and Industry has warned motorists to check their insurance policies after the discovery of an unauthorised company trading on the Lloyd's market. Drivers who have taken out policies through Eastern Star Motor Policies or SOS Insurance Services, both of which are supposed to be in East London, are driving uninsured. Eastern Star is not authorised to carry on insurance business in the UK and is registered at an address in Gracechurch Street which does not exist. SOS is registered at an accommodation address in St Georges Road.

A spokesman for the DTI said vehicle owners holding a cover note or certificate issued by, or in the name of Eastern Star, should contact their insurance adviser. Police are understood to have launched an investigation.

Downgrading hits Reed

SHARES of Reed International, joint owner of the Reed Elsevier publishing group, fell 18p to 607.5p yesterday after a downgrading by Merrill Lynch, the Wall Street investment firm. The fall also came after a federal court ruling in New York that may affect trading at Lexis-Nexis, Reed Elsevier's on-line publisher of legal material. The ruling removed much of the copyright protection claimed by West Publishing, a Thomson subsidiary, whose material is distributed on Lexis-Nexis.

American-BA link hope

AMERICAN AIRLINES plans to go ahead with some kind of partnership with British Airways even if regulators block an alliance. Bob Crandall, chairman of AMR, parent company of American, told the annual shareholders' meeting in Dallas that, under the current UK-US bilateral agreement, "we can do a big piece of what we seek to do, without any new approvals". Regulators in Washington, London and Brussels are currently assessing the BA-American link-up.

CIA Group acquisition

CIA GROUP, the advertising media specialist media buyer, is acquiring the MarMedia Group, with offices in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, for a maximum £29.6 million in cash and shares. The purchase will be part funded from the proceeds of a £17 million share placing and open offer. MarMedia earned aggregate profits of £5.1 million before tax and exceptional items last year on turnover of £250 million. The company is placing new shares at 150p each.

Southnews adds papers

SOUTHNEWS, the local newspaper publisher, has added the *Asia Times* and *Caribbean Times* to its stable. The group, which also owns *Eastern Eye* and publishes 35 paid-for and free papers in and around London, yesterday reported record profits. Pre-tax profits rose 88 per cent to £6.3 million (£3.4 million) in the year to March 29. A final dividend of 5.5p (4.05p) a share, due on August 1, makes a total of 7.75p (5.81p) from earnings of 26.61p (14.62p).

Vibroplant to buy

VIBROPLANT, the plant hire company, has agreed to buy Torrent (Rugby), a tool hire business, for a maximum consideration of £9.95 million in cash and shares. In the year to September 30, 1996, Torrent earned pre-tax profits of £1.05 million on sales of £254 million. Vibroplant is further reducing costs with measures that will cost about £875,000. It expects to pay a final 2.65p, maintaining the total at 4.05p.

New higher investment rates from 1 June 1997

	GROSS PA	GROSS MONTHLY	NET PA	NET MONTHLY
1 YEAR NOTICE ACCOUNT				
£100,000 and over	6.75%	6.55%	5.40%	5.24%
£50,000 to £99,999	6.25%	6.08%	5.00%	4.86%
£25,000 to £49,999	6.00%	5.84%	4.80%	4.67%
180 DAY NOTICE ACCOUNT				
£100,000 and over	6.50%	6.31%	5.20%	5.05%
£50,000 to £99,999	6.25%	6.08%	5.00%	4.86%
£20,000 to £49,999	5.85%	5.70%	4.68%	4.56%
£10,000 to £19,999	5.50%	5.37%	4.40%	4.30%
£5,000 to £9,999	5.00%	4.89%	4.00%	3.91%
90 DAY NOTICE ACCOUNT				
£100,000 and over	6.00%	5.84%	4.80%	4.67%
£50,000 to £99,999	5.65%	5.51%	4.52%	4.41%
£20,000 to £49,999	5.25%	5.13%	4.20%	4.10%
£10,000 to £19,999	4.75%	4.65%	3.80%	3.72%
£5,000 to £9,999	4.25%	4.17%	3.40%	3.34%
£2,500 to £4,999	3.50%	3.45%	2.80%	2.76%
30 DAY SAVINGS ACCOUNT				
£10,000 and over	4.50%	N/A	3.60%	N/A
£2,500 to £9,999	4.00%	N/A	3.20%	N/A
£500 to £2,499	3.50%	N/A	2.80%	N/A
PREMIUM DEPOSIT ACCOUNT				
£100,000 and over	5.50%	5.37%	4.40%	4.30%
£50,000 to £99,999	5.00%	4.89%	4.00%	3.91%
£20,000 to £49,999	4.50%	4.41%	3.60%	3.53%
£10,000 to £19,999	4.00%	3.93%	3.20%	3.14%
£5,000 to £9,999	3.50%	3.45%	2.80%	2.76%
£2,500 to £4,999	3.00%	2.96%	2.40%	2.37%
£1,000 to £2,499	2.50%	N/A	2.00%	N/A
£1 to £999	1.00%	N/A	0.80%	N/A

TESSA (Issue 2)

All Amounts	7.00%	N/A	N/A	N/A
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VARIABLE RATE FOLLOW UP TESSA

All Amounts	7.00%	N/A	N/A	N/A
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REGULAR SAVERS ACCOUNT

All Amounts	6.75%	N/A	5.40%	N/A
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ACORN SAVINGS ACCOUNT

All Amounts	5.50%	N/A	4.40%	N/A
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ALBION PREMIER SAVER ACCOUNT

£5,000 and over	3.75%	N/A	3.00%	N/A
£250 to £4,999	3.00%	N/A	2.40%	N/A

COMMUNITY ACCOUNT

£5,000 and over	3.75%	N/A	3.00%	N/A
£250 to £4,999	3.00%	N/A	2.40%	N/A

COMBINED PORTFOLIO ACCOUNT

£25,000 and over	8.25%	N/A	6.60%	N/A
£10,000 to £24,999	7.75%	N/A	6.20%	N/A
£1,000 to £9,999	7.00%	N/A	5.60%	N/A

DIRECT INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNT

£100,000 and over	6.50%	6.31%	5.20%	5.05%
£50,000 to £99,999	6.25%	6.08%	5.00%	4.86%
£25,000 to £49,999	6.00%	5.84%	4.80%	4.67%
£10,000 to £24,999	5.50%	5.37%	4.40%	4.30%
£5,000 to £9,999	5.00%	4.89%	4.00%	3.91%
£1,000 to £4,999	0.50%	0.50%	0.40%	0.40%

DIRECT 90 DAY NOTICE ACCOUNT

£100,000 and over	6.75%	6.55%	5.40%	5.24%
£50,000 to £99,999	6.25%	6.08%	5.00%	4.86%
£25,000 to £49,999	6.00%	5.84%	4.80%	4.67%

ACCOUNTS NOT AVAILABLE TO NEW INVESTORS

TESSA (FIRST ISSUE)	All Amounts	6.50%	N/A
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PAID UP SHARE ACCOUNT

£1,000 and over	1.50%	1.20%
£1 to £999	1.00%	0.80%

PREMIUM SHARE ACCOUNT

£100,000 and over	5.43%	4.34%
£50,000 to £99,999	4.94%	3.95%
£20,000 to £49,999	4.45%	3.56%
£10,000 to £19,999	3.96%	3.17%
£5,000 to £9,999	3.47%	2.78%
£2,500 to £4,999	2.98%	2.38%
£1,000 to £2,499	2.48%	1.98%
£1 to £999	1.00%	0.80%

PREMIUM SHARE ACCOUNT

£100,000 and over	5.39%	4.31%
£50,000 to £99,999	4.91%	3.93%
£20,000 to £49,999	4.43%	3.54%
£10,000 to £19,999	3.94%	3.15%
£5,000 to £9,999	3.45%	2.76%
£2,500 to £4,999	2.97%	2.38%
£1,000 to £2,499	2.48%	1.98%
£1 to £999	1.00%	0.80%

QUARTERLY

£100,000 and over	5.39%	4.31%
£50,000 to £99,999	4.91%	3.93%
£20,000 to £49,999	4.43%	3.54%
£10,000 to £19,999	3.94%	3.15%
£5,000 to £9,999	3.45%	2.76%
£2,500 to £4,999	2.97%	2.38%
£1,000 to £2,499	2.48%	1.98%
£1 to £999	1.00%	0.80%

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Labour 'to allow' sale of warships

BY OLIVER AUGUST

BRITAIN'S lucrative warship sales would not be threatened by the Government's emphasis on human rights when granting export licenses. Vospers Thornycroft said yesterday.

The company, one of three UK warship yards, said Labour ministers would promote arms sales to the Middle and Far East, whatever the public rhetoric. Martin Jay, chief executive, said: "The countries we export to have nothing to fear from Labour."

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, is due to announce export guidelines for arms sales.

Last year Vospers delivered two fast strike craft to Qatar, a second corvette to Oman and a minehunter to Saudi Arabia, then the focus of human rights protesters.

Mr Jay is waiting to meet Lord Gilbert, the Defence Procurement Minister, but export licenses will not be a priority. Mr Jay will lobby for the extension of competitive tendering to warship refits.

For the year to March 31, Vospers reported pre-tax profits of £31 million, up 11 per cent, and a £116 million cash pile. Earnings per share rose to 61.9p from 57.9p, and the dividend rose 11 per cent to 26p, with a final of 18.5p.

Tempos, page 28



Martin Jay: "We have nothing to fear from Labour"

Interflora rebels reject ballot plea

BY FRASER NELSON

REBEL florists who voted out the old board of Interflora have rejected a petition from 400 members of the bouquet delivery network demanding that the future of the association is put to a general vote.

The new board, which came to power on a show of hands at an emergency meeting two weeks ago, said yesterday that it will not proceed with a ballot of all the association's 2,500 members.

The decision infuriated the ousted board members, who claim that under the association's articles, a postal ballot must now be taken. They said in a statement: "This is a very

sad day for Interflora. The new board's actions fly in the face of democracy and demonstrate a total disregard for the view of the members." They will decide on Tuesday whether to take the new board to court.

The dispute erupted over the former board's decision to raise annual membership fees while reducing the cost for each delivery transaction. Rebels, led by Bev Wood, a Leeds florist, argued this would squeeze out smaller sellers. There were also fears that the reforms mooted by the old board would lead the company to demutualisation and end up in a possible flotation.

Exchange returns £10m after cuts

BY ADAM JONES

THE Stock Exchange is returning £10 million to members after cutting costs by nearly a quarter last year.

The exchange's underlying income for the year to March 31, 1997, dropped from £196.1 million to £191.8 million, reflecting the loss of income from the transfer of settlement business from the paper-based Tallisman system to Crest.

Progress in the exchange's massive efficiency drive, however, meant operating costs were down from £161.3 million to £122.4 million, leaving a pre-tax surplus of £25.3 million (£9.5 million). This enabled £17.1 million to be

transferred to reserves, compared with £800,000 in the previous year.

Provisions of £41.5 million were also made against the cost of the exchange's restructuring and strategy change.

Many of the cost savings were made through staff cuts. At one point in the 1990s, the Exchange had about 3,500 employees. This has now been reduced to 725-725, and is soon to drop to 550.

Gavin Casey, chief executive, said: "This is the fourth year in a row we have reduced our costs." He is optimistic that the rate of new international listings will continue to rise.

Skye project costs are a bridge too far

THE National Audit Office has criticised one of the first Private Finance Initiative projects after a large over-spend by a government department and a lack of comparison in bidding costs for the building of the bridge to the Isle of Skye (Christine Buckley writes).

The Scottish Office Development Department paid the developer £12 million towards the building of the bridge -

twice the initial estimate of £6 million - although it said additional costs were difficult to avoid because of alterations stemming from a public inquiry. It was further hampered by having to negotiate costs with the developer, Miller Dywidag, because other bidders had withdrawn by the final stage of the bid.

The bridge was finished in 1995, six years after the project started. Sir John

Bourn, Comptroller and Auditor-General, said lessons should be learnt from the Skye project, although his office emphasised that it was an early PFI programme and is now being judged in the light of experience.

In the NAO's first investigation into PFI work Sir John said a number of procedures could have been implemented better.

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Austria S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
Belgium S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
Canada S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
Denmark S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
France S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
Germany S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
Italy S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
Japan S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
Netherlands S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
Portugal S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
Spain S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
Sweden S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
Switzerland S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
USA S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655
UK S	2.25	Bank	0.655	0.655

PLC. Different rates apply to travel's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

PowerGen plc

Second class on the Labour express

It was Michael Heseltine who promised to intervene before breakfast, lunch and dinner, but yesterday the new President of the Board of Trade adopted a somewhat interventionist stance. Her decision to refer National Express's rail franchise acquisitions to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission was in complete defiance of the advice of the Office of Fair Trading.

John Bridgeman, the OFT's Director-General, should find a quiet corner to commiserate with Eddie George, another victim of the new Government's tramping tendencies.

The Governor of the Bank of England is being treated with near contempt by Chancellor Gordon Brown and his gang. The sin of giving the Governor barely 24-hours notice of a cataclysmic change in the Bank's role is now being compounded by a drip feed of rumours that he can forget any plans for a second term of office.

The much vaunted partnership which New Labour is pledged to establish with the business world is looking a trifle rocky after this dual attack.

To be fair to Mrs Beckett, she has made no secret of her wishes to tighten up competition policy, and rail franchises provide her with a publicly popular starting point. Bridgeman is graciously indicating that trains are a special case and he is not taking offence at being over-ridden. But even before the election, he had

made clear his frustration at the OFT's lack of powers; he is unlikely to be enthused to see what power he does have subsumed in this manner.

His predecessor, Sir Bryan Carsberg, quit after finding the level of ministerial intervention in competition issues intolerable, and that was before the zealous Mrs B moved into office.

She can, at least, make a case for her actions being in the public interest but it is harder to see how the fiasco over the Bank of England can be portrayed as anything other than arrogance or ineptitude.

For Mr George, one of the world's more respected central bankers, was understandably furious about the short notice he was given of Chancellor Brown's planned changes. But he did not threaten to resign. There are now hints that certain Labour politicians may be keen to engineer just such a departure, although the motives are opaque. We can surely discount stories that their intention is to create a vacancy for the benefit of Gavin Davies, a pet Labour economist, for his appointment in the wake of such stories would eliminate the idea of an independent Bank of England.

Luckily, Mr George is a sufficiently independent spirit for the recent turn of events to have ensured that resignation is not on his agenda.

However, the episode has stirred up uncertainty, not just at the Bank but in the financial markets. Mr Brown should be wary of believing that the Government can sweet talk the money men as easily as it can some parts of the business community.

Selling the right image

Storehouse has an image problem. Its penchant for changing finance directors has not helped, and the bow ties favoured by the current incumbent's predecessor, Terry Steele, coupled with his previous employment at Lloyd's Chemists certainly raised eyebrows. But the company insists that the

COMMENTARY

by our City Editor

figures should be allowed to speak, and they tell a reasonable tale.

Storehouse is not yet in the Marks & Spencer league, but it is now a focused business with two main brands: BHS and Mothercare. The former is growing at a reasonable rate and the indications are that it has found a recipe which will speed that up.

Stores which have been subjected to the refurbishment, coyly dubbed Millennium stores, are showing double the growth rate of the rest of the chain. Sadly, the group's major London stores have not yet been given the full Millennium treatment, which contributes to the image problem: retail analysts do venture into shops occasionally, but they do not venture far from home.

Mothercare is a different story. The company has a host of excuses for why this once powerful brand saw sales fall over the year and most of them have been heard before. The message that

they are enjoying some growth at the moment hits that image problem, since the company cannot explain why the excuses for the last twelve months no longer apply.

But it should be possible to rebuild Mothercare as the category killer it once was. Whether it was necessary to so generously relieve Boots of the problem of Children's World in order to do so has yet to be proven.

Keith Edelman came to Storehouse with the reputation of a young man eager to do deals — another image problem for a business that clearly needed strong operational management after an eventful few years. Conranisation had been followed by the colourful reign of the banana-chewing American David Dworkin. Both knew a lot about image but neither were meant for the corporate long haul.

Edelman and his chairman, Alan Smith, survivor of a brief

and uncomfortable stint discovering that Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy did not have need of a chief executive at Kingfisher, are now trying to tell the City that they know what is needed at Storehouse. The answer is simple: more sales.

Once they convince that they can produce them, the image problem should fade very fast.

Rough ride for transport shares

As the monopolies commission, as per instructions from its new boss, takes a look at the ScotRail and Central Trains franchises, it will have to judge whether combined rail and bus operators offer customers co-ordinated, improved transport services or give operators the chance for some predatory pricing. If the answer is "possibly" on both counts, then Mrs Beckett will not be slow to call for tighter regulation to try to secure the first without the second.

If restrictions meant that a few single-asset companies went bust and had to be run as public bodies again, well, that hardly constitutes renationalisation, does it?

National Express has indicated that it could certainly cope with a little more squeezing, and had already acceded to some of the demands of the OFT if its acquisitions were to proceed. But other, less well subsidised, companies could find it rather harder to accommodate a new, tougher pricing regime.

Transport company shares were already showing a wariness of the new Government and now have good reason to shudder.

If the monopolies commission takes the view that overlapping transport systems are undesirable for Scotland, then is that to be the view about the rest of the country?

And what if the inquiry in the Midlands takes in, as it must, those bus routes which provide almost two thirds of National Express's group profits — and decides such a monopoly is too powerful?

Up in smoke

A NEW anti-smoking drug has just hit the pharmacists of the United States. Sadly, it cannot help those in the UK who are addicted to the dreaded weed. It seems that the Health Department refuses to designate smoking as a disease. If logic prevails, this attitude may soon change, in line with the government attitude to tobacco advertising. Glaxo, makers of the said drug, are not holding their breath.

BNB set for sharp drop in income

By JON ASHWORTH

BNB Resources, the recruitment-to-training company that owns Norman Broadbent International (NBI), is braced for a sharp drop in income from head-hunting activities.

A one-year cross-subsidy arrangement with former headhunting colleagues ended in March, depriving BNB of at least £1 million in income. Former NBI staff, including Miles Broadbent, co-founder of Norman Broadbent, were obliged to hand over 50 per cent of their earnings for 12 months, under a deal agreed with David Norman, chairman of BNB. This cushion has now ended, leaving BNB to make up the shortfall. Mr Broadbent and his former colleagues are thought to have handed over in excess of £1 million last year.

Journalists were excluded from yesterday's annual meeting of BNB shareholders. In a statement released to the market, Mr Norman described 1996 as "a year of significant reorganisation and, in aggregate, lower profitability", and said that 1997 profits would be more heavily weighted towards the second half, reflecting "slower progress" in executive search. He added: "We now rely proportionately much less heavily upon the contribution from Norman Broadbent."

Mr Norman, who was paid £627,000 last year, down from £765,000 in 1995, is likely to have faced questions about the substantial NBI staff departures, which saw operating income at NBI fall 33 per cent in the year to end-December. The fall came in spite of the cushioning effect of the cross-subsidy arrangement.

The numbers were boosted further by a full-year contribution from Goodman Graham, the IT recruitment specialist. Mr Norman's share of NBI profits increased to £191,000 (£175,000), but his BNB performance bonus tumbled from £193,000 to £30,000, leaving him with an overall bonus of £221,000. He earned a basic salary of £380,000 in 1996.

Mothercare suffers as parents buy 'brands'

By PAUL DURMAN

HEAVY spending by parents on branded sportswear for older children is eating into the money available for clothes for the under-fives. Storehouse claimed yesterday (see Commentary, this page).

Keith Edelman, chief executive of BHS and Mothercare, said: "Some of the money that goes into 2- to 5-year-olds is going out to pay for some of the highly priced branded goods."

He said this was one reason why Mothercare failed to meet its targets last year. Although, operating profits moved ahead by 10.7 per cent to £26.8 million, sales growth was dependent of the strength of the international franchise business, where sales rose 27 per

cent to £45.4 million. Mothercare's like-for-like sales — disclosed for the first time — fell by 3.3 per cent.

Mr Edelman said that Mothercare was trying to counter the competition from branded sportswear by redesigning its clothing along similar lines — for example, a Thomas the Tank Engine sweatshirt that majored on the word "Thomas" and incorporated only a small logo.

Mr Edelman commented: "A 2- to 5-year-old does not really want to run around in Nike. He wants to run around in Thomas the Tank Engine or Postman Pat — but he wants to do it in a fashionable way."

Storehouse was reporting an 11 per cent fall in pre-tax

profits from £109.9 million to £97.8 million in the 52 weeks to March 29. Group sales rose 15 per cent to £1.25 billion. The profits fall was because of the £16.4 million cost of restructuring Children's World, bought from Boots last year, and a £5.1 million goodwill writeback on the sale of Blazer, the menswear chain. Retail operating profits rose 17 per cent to £119 million.

BHS increased its profits by 14 per cent to £88.3 million. A strong Christmas contributed to a 3.1 per cent rise in like-for-like sales.

Storehouse said it now had sufficient profits to invest £120 million this year in new stores, rolling out its "millennium" store fit to more branches of

BHS, and converting Children's World to Mothercare World. This programme is expected to create 1,000 new jobs.

Storehouse intends to spend more than £50 million modernising its management information systems over the next three years.

The company said that group sales in the eight weeks to last Saturday were 15.5 per cent ahead of last year. UK sales at BHS were 6.7 per cent up, while Mothercare was 5.7 per cent ahead.

A final dividend of 4.8p will increase the total payout by 13 per cent to 8.1p a share.

Tempus, page 28
Worse for wear, page 29

Graseby chief recruited by Balfour to boost margins

By PAUL DURMAN

BALFOUR BEATTY is attempting to improve the margins of its UK construction activities by recruiting Paul Lester, chief executive of Graseby, the electronic instruments company.

Mr Lester, who has run Graseby for seven years, will be managing director of UK construction, which encompasses Balfour Beatty Construction, Haden Building Services, the mechanical engineering business, and Balfour

Kilpatrick, the electrical engineering contractor. He will report to Mike Welton, Balfour Beatty's chief executive.

Alan Jones, chief executive of BICC, the cables group that owns Balfour Beatty, is anxious to improve profit margins from the construction business. Last year Balfour Beatty made only £10 million of profit from £2.1 billion of sales. UK construction provides more than a third of this turnover.

Mr Lester, 47, had a chequered time at Graseby as the company struggled with

declining defence spending and a variety of other problems. He said yesterday: "The one success I have had is getting the margins up from 3 per cent to over 10 per cent."

Balfour Beatty will pay Mr Lester more than the £184,000 salary he received from Graseby last year. Mr Lester's replacement at Graseby is John Hawkins, who was formerly president of Philips Media, a computer games and CD-Rom business.

Tempus, page 28



Geoffrey Maddrell views the Guinness-GrandMet merger as an opportunity

Glenmorangie cheer

By FRASER NELSON

GLENMORANGIE is staking up three subsidiaries of Guinness and Grand Metropolitan with a view to bidding for businesses jettisoned as part of the brewing giant's £23 billion merger.

The company, which bought Allied Domecq's Islay distillery for £7 million last year, said it is still capable of more acquisitions.

Geoffrey Maddrell, chairman, said: "We do not feel threatened by the merger."

and, in the short term, we view it as an opportunity. Things are bound to drop off the bus, and these are brands which we could pick up."

Yesterday the company returned pre-tax profits of £7.8 million (£6.57 million) for the year to March 31 buoyed by the success of exports and its new range of whiskies.

Glenmorangie Expressions and Glenmorangie Wood Finishes, the new brands, lifted their sales by 20 per cent

over the year. Glen Moray, the Highland malt, saw a 46 per cent increase in volume.

Mr Maddrell said the company is saving the whisky for bottling in anticipation of a surge in demand over the next five years. Earnings were 41.2p per limited voting A share, and 20.63p per B share, both up 3 per cent. The total dividend rises 10 per cent to 13.2p per A share with a 10.175p final, and to 6.6p per B share, with a 5.087p final.

Vaux sees benefits of pubs exit

By FRASER NELSON

RETREAT from tenanted pubs helped Vaux, the hotels, pubs and brewing combine, to lift profits to £15.2 million (£13.3 million) at the halfway stage as the company shifted towards the better-performing hotels business.

Vaux has shed one in ten of its 776 pubs over the last year, leaving its Swallows Hotels chain to make 50 per cent of trading profit for the first time. Its managed pubs returned a 14 per cent increase in profit, to £4.7 million, with the growth led by demand for food. Sir Paul Nicholson, chairman, said the decline in profits from the remaining pubs is showing signs of slowing in spite of a disappointing Easter.

The hotel chain lifted profitability from 26 per cent to 29 per cent, with room rates rising to £49.12 (£45.14).

St Andrews, the nursing home chain sold to Highfield Group last year for £11.5 million, bowed out with departures plunging from 16 per cent to 23 per cent and operating profit declining 24 per cent to £1.32 million.

Overall, earnings rose to 8.33p (7.23p) for the 24 weeks to March 15 and an interim dividend of 3.7p (3.56p) is due on July 7.

Tempus, page 28

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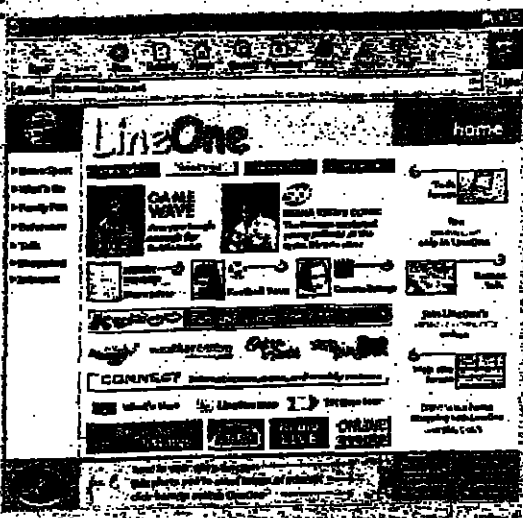
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BUSINESS
LEADERSmall firms are
more to blame

From G. P. Trace

Sir, The current initiative to make interest on overdue business debt over-looks one essential fact. It is not the large company that regularly pays at 60, 90 or even 120 days that does the damage. This is predictable and once the initial credit period is finished the supplying company receives regular monthly payments. Should interest on overdue debt become mandatory, these large companies will merely negotiate 60, 90 or 120 days as of right, avoid interest and nothing will have changed.

Ten years working at the heart of the problem as a management consultant advising small to medium-sized companies tells me that the real damage is caused when one small company runs into financial trouble and completely stops paying another, often causing a domino effect. I have tackled the problem from both sides and can state that charging interest will do nothing. The struggling company would gladly pay interest rather than the capital sum owed. The interest is an irrelevance to the cashflow of the recipient. (About £80 per month on a £10,000 debt). However, any interest paid reduces the total fund available to pay its creditors — again nothing has changed.

There will be administrative costs in complying. Will a credit licence be needed and, if not, is this a loophole for unscrupulous companies, is the interest to be invoiced and be liable to tax as extra profit, possibly before it is received? I could go on, but I hope that this is enough to cause supporters of this outwardly sensible idea to revisit their proposal and think again.

Yours faithfully,
G. P. TRACE,
Sandston,
19 Fairview Road,
Oxton, Birkenhead,
Wirral.

Stop whingeing
about sterling

From S. W. de Looze

Sir, I am fed up with UK companies moaning about the strength of the pound and using it as an excuse for falling profits.

May I use your columns to remind British industry that Germany and Japan have lived for 50 years or so with a constantly appreciating currency. These economies remain two of the most successful in the world. Rather than calling for sterling to be steadily depreciated in order to maintain its competitiveness, British industry should take a leaf out of the Germany-Japan book and use a strong pound as a driver for innovation and efficiency improvement.

Let's hear no more of this whingeing.

Yours faithfully,
S. W. de LOOZE,
10 South Park View,
Gerrards Cross,
Buckinghamshire.

ECONOMICS
ANATOLE KALETSKYBrown's blunders will hit
taxpayers in the pocket

Lower growth
projections
will lead
to the
worst of
all worlds

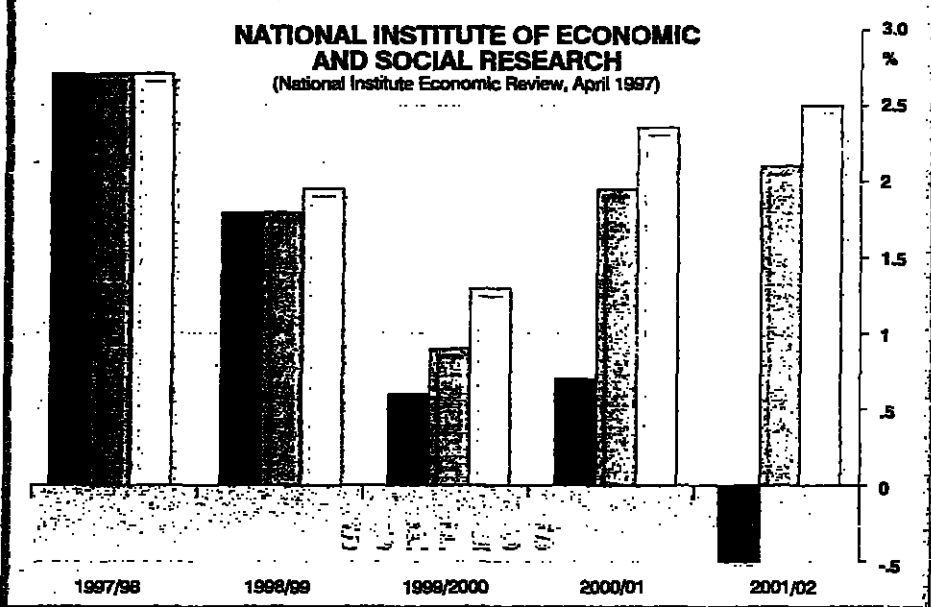
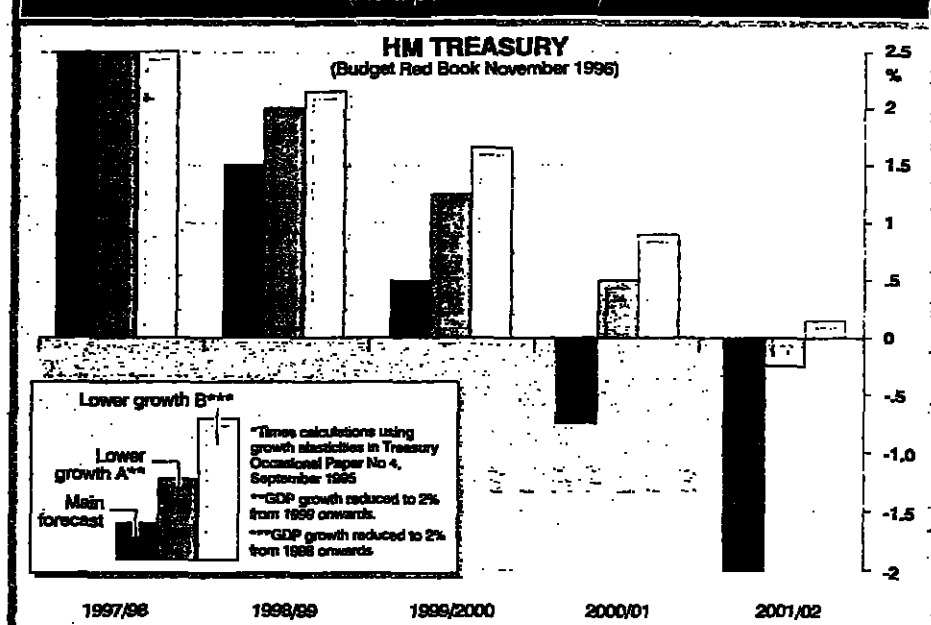
For the first time in my life I can feel some sympathy for Sir Iain Vallance, the "fat cat" chairman of British Telecom. Sir Iain famously said this week that if he had known what Tony Blair was going to do to his company, he would not have voted Labour. If I had known what Gordon Brown was going to do to the economy, I would have voted for the Monster Raving Loony Party. After just three weeks in power, Mr Brown has made enough potentially disastrous misjudgements to match the lifetime achievements of John Major and Nigel Lawson.

His latest blunder (I will come to the most serious one later) was to allow his minions to start a whispering campaign against Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England. The apparent intention was to put a personal friend and long-time political associate of Mr Brown's in charge of the supposedly independent Bank. Like the Chancellor's other rushed wheezes and gimmicks, the attack on Mr George was probably never planned in detail. It was just that the previous day's Brown gimmick — the sudden announcement of a new super-regulator for the City — created an opportunity for spin-doctors that was too good to resist.

The characteristically high-handed manner of the Chancellor's announcement so annoyed Mr. George that the Governor let slip at a press conference that he had considered resignation. The Labour spin-doctors reacted as sharks do to blood. They could not restrain themselves from telling the *Financial Times* that Mr George had "played into our hands", adding that there was now a "high probability" of the Governor being replaced. These inflammatory comments were far more significant than Mr George's outburst itself.

Steady Eddie, whose temperament does not always do justice to his moniker, is actually renowned for his tantrums. A senior Treasury official once famously remarked that having small children was a vital qualification for working with the Bank of England, since it offered an insight into the best ways of dealing with Mr George. In this context it is also worth recalling the Governor's melodramatic lament after he was overruled on interest rates by Kenneth Clarke for the first time. "I sometimes wake up at night worrying about the country's future," he declared.

What is far more important, about Mr George than his personal manner, however, is his unshakable devotion to the

HOW BROWN CAN CREATE A "TORY BLACK HOLE"
IN THE PUBLIC FINANCES
Government deficit forecasts adjusted for lower growth*

Bank of England and the great anti-inflationary project on which he feels that the country and his institution have now embarked. Now that he has achieved his lifelong ambition of steering the Bank to independence, nothing would make him resign. Of course, Tony Blair may choose not to reappoint him at the end of his five-year contract in July next year. But until then, Steady Eddie will remain indomitable at the Bank. And the more Mr Brown tries to threaten or undermine him, the tougher he will become in his determination to do what he thinks is right. From this point of view, the whispering campaign against Mr George could turn out to be costly miscalculation for the Government and, more importantly, for the British economy. The Governor will not resign, but the moment he becomes convinced that he has no prospect of reappointment will also be the moment when the Government loses what little influence over British interest rates it may still have had. There is no gristlier fate for a finance minister than to confront an aggrieved, hostile and (understandably) indignant Governor with an historic mission to establish the anti-inflationary

"credibility" of a newly independent central bank. There could thus be a real economic significance to this new comic subplot of the Gordon and Eddie show. That significance is probably just the opposite of the inference the markets were drawing yesterday. The traders' knee-jerk response to the Brown-George fracas was to sell sterling and dump British bonds. On reflection, however, exactly the opposite behaviour might have been justified. Having made the Bank legally independent, Mr Brown has now compounded this error by forcing the Bank to prove its independence and has then created the classic policy nightmare of central bank independence: a state of distrust between the Treasury and the Bank.

The chances are now even higher than they were before that the Bank will raise interest rates at the earliest opportunity and will stick to a tough monetary policy regardless of what happens to sterling. Mr George's views on sterling could not be more hawkish. He is known to have told other Bank officials on Black Wednesday that the pound would

eventually bounce back to its old ERM parity of DM2.95. It is also said, though this is less certain, that he argued against joining the ERM because he believed that a central parity of DM2.95 was not high enough. Thus if sterling did fall substantially (which under the new circumstances is becoming rather hard to imagine), the resulting increase in interest rates could be much sharper than the market expects. In either case, the most likely upshot would be a further six to nine months during which sterling is seriously overvalued and interest rates keep rising, yet consumer demand keeps growing because of the lags in the impact of monetary policy and the pervasively expansionary effects of a strong currency on consumer incomes through the terms of trade.

And if a further rise in both interest rates and sterling were not bad enough, Mr Brown has set another economic booby-trap for anyone who is trying to run a business or find a job in Britain. He has decided to raise taxes — and to raise them in the way that is least likely to relieve the upward pressure on interest rates and could actually add to overvaluation of sterling in the short term.

In a little-noticed announcement released last Tuesday, the Chancellor made the bizarre decision to "consider" reducing the economic growth rates assumed by the Treasury in its calculations on the public sector borrowing requirement. The result of this reform will be to raise sharply the official projections for future public deficits. The Treasury assumed last November that gross domestic product would grow 3.5 per cent in the present financial year, followed by 3 per cent in 1998-99 and 2.5 per cent in the three years after that. But Mr Brown, in his wisdom, has apparently decided that a trend growth rate of 2.5 is "far too high". And as evidence of the respect in which he holds the official economists who produce such forecasts Mr Brown has given the National Audit Office two weeks to produce a number more to his liking.

The most immediate effect of this quixotic decision will be to give the Bank a further reason to raise interest rates. If the trend growth rate is reduced to 2 per cent or so, the present growth rate of more than 3 per cent will look even more anomalous and inflationary. And the previous Government's assumption that there is still some slack left in the economy and that unemployment should be allowed to fall further — will also be called into question. Both of these arguments will redouble the Bank's zeal to slow down the economy by raising interest rates.

To make matters worse, the reduction in growth expectations will have an horrendous effect on the outlook for deficits and taxes. The expected PSBR — which is set to disappear by the year 2000, even without any increase in taxes, according to the Treasury's present forecasts — will be raised to between 0.5 and 2.5 per cent of GDP (see charts), depending on whether the downgrade in growth expectations is imposed from 1998 or 1999. Even these inflated deficits would not, of course, be particularly alarming were it not for the only possible motivation that can be imputed to Mr Brown. Presumably Mr Brown wants to make the deficit prospects look worse than they are in order to justify a programme of steadily rising taxes — especially on companies and pensions funds. These would have little impact on consumer spending in the short run and would therefore do nothing to deter the Bank from raising interest rates. They would, however, make British government bonds even more attractive than they already are to investors, pushing the pound up still further, before hitting investment and output in 1998 and 1999, just when the Bank's monetary austerity was also starting to bite.

But for Mr Brown all of these clouds on the economic horizon do at least have a silver lining. By his policies he will at least have the satisfaction of achieving the reduction in Britain's growth rate that he has now instructed the civil servants to assume.

Child fashions
leave retailers
worse for wearJon Ashworth reports on tough state of
the competitive children's wear market

What is it about children's clothing that brings out the worst in everyone? Placid wives are transformed into raging monsters if deprived of the latest BabyGap dungarees. Cash-stricken husbands start working weekends, and even such masters of retailing as Marks & Spencer seem unable to make any money out of it all. Yesterday's results from Storehouse, the BHS-to-Mothercare group, made much of the difficulties. Keith Edelman, chief executive, said children's wear enjoyed a good run from 1990 to 1995, with parents spending consistently more each year. Spending, held steady last year, but did not rise. Mr Edelman said he expected children's wear to pick up again in a couple of years: "You can't dip in and out of markets just because they're having a bad year."

This week's record profits from Marks & Spencer would have been better had it not been for the tough state of the children's wear market. Sir Richard Greenbury, chairman, conceded this was a sector where M&S had the lowest

lower in children's wear than adultwear, and stock-holding needs are greater because of the wider range of sizes that need to be carried. Profitability is lower, and it is more difficult for children's wear retailers to cover the occupancy costs of prime high street space. Hence retailers such as Next, Principles or Etam place their children's clothes in less accessible areas. Verdict sees deepening problems at Adams, part of Sears, and static prospects for Mothercare. Next is seen as the exception, increasing market share by transposing adult designs into children's ranges, while Gap has rapidly built a loyal following. M&S, the UK's single largest children's wear retailer, could boost prospects by broadening its product range to include more fashionable merchandise.

Children's wear is a strong area of focus for food retailers, who are making their presence felt. Asda leads the field with its George brand, while Tesco's items and the more recent Kids Own at Sainsbury are gaining in prominence. Part of the problem for



Gap year: designer label with a loyal following

retailers is the ready market in nearly-new clothes. A pair of hard-wearing dungarees costing £50 in a high street boutique can be had for a handful of pounds elsewhere. Parents also complain about poor in-store layout. However, designer brands such as BabyGap and GapKids continue to lure the faithful with their designer cachet. As a Gap spokesman says: "It is good quality, fun, basic clothing, which has a certain aspirational feel for the parents." And GapKids changes its collection every six weeks, making it hard for the bigger retailers to keep up.

Children's wear will remain one of the most difficult markets for making money. As Verdict says: "A future of a falling birthrate, growing competition, and increasingly fashion-conscious customers means companies will have to run faster to stand still."

I WANT TO
MEASURE YOUR
CUCUMBERS

commission n. as in European 1 what we must be at the heart of 2 what we must be at the throat of (see Euroscaptics) 3 fee paid to an agent.

brussels n. 1 vegetable which children are not prepared to swallow 2 capital of the EU (concept Euroscaptics are not prepared to swallow) 3 location of specialist EU and competition law practice.

lobby n. 1 place where MP's throw things esp. tantrums, comments etc. 2 endeavour to influence politicians and civil servants to promote a particular viewpoint.

advocacy n. 1 sickness caused by excessive consumption of Dutch egg-yolk liqueur 2 skill of pleading a case orally in court 3 support for a cause.

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Bruised fruit

THE Bank of England is £3 million to the good after an unexpected windfall from the collapsed Slater, Walker. The profit is noted in the Bank's annual report. Younger readers may like to know that Slater, Walker became the Polly Peck of its day, under the tender guidance of Jim Slater. It was pushed under by the secondary banking crisis of the early 1970s and the collapse of the stock market, when the index fell 70 per cent — yes, it can indeed. The Bank was required to lend support in 1975 and bought the whole lot two years later. Slater is now an investment guru who writes about picking

shares, bringing to mind Johnson's quip about second marriages: "A triumph of hope over experience."

A Bank source said the £3 million was a deposit that Slater, Walker had always had there. It was treated as a residual asset when the business was wound up after being in members' voluntary liquidation for several years. I wonder vaguely why creditors did not get the cash. "Because we bought it," she says plyingly.

THE after-dinner cabaret at the Building Societies Association was Helen Shapiro, the *Sixties* pop singer. This led to a rather curious cultural clash, my spies tell me. All the crusty old members of the BSA were busy pretending they had never heard of her: "Before my time. Frigorous pop stuff. Led Zeppelin, now that was proper music." Unfortunately, in one of those weird and increasingly common shifts in popular culture, Ms Shapiro, by virtue of her age and utter naivness, is now blindly cool again. So she went down a storm with the younger members. Me, I lost the plot when the style police disintegrated Abba.

Easy go

I HEAR Julie Ramshaw, the former Morgan Stanley retail analyst, is on



her way again from Laura Ashley where she is director of merchandising, and may head back to the City. Sources say there is no truth in any suggestion that her relationship with Ann Iverson, the American who took home more than £1 million in pay last year, may have become strained.

Hoare Govett looks a good billet for her, the retail team being a bit light there after Richard Edwards upped and left for Salomon Brothers. There are said to be plans to expand the team further, to take in European retailers. Talking of strained relationships, her former colleague at Morgan Stanley, Nick Bubb, this week announced he was joining Société Générale from Mees Pierson.

THE Queen will today visit recently quoted Newcastle United. (And

how long have you been an inside left?) There she will receive a number 9 shirt, as sported by Alan Shearer, the England captain. It is not thought likely Her Majesty will ever wear it. The gift is to be handed over by Sir John Hall, who has acquired a curious nickname. He is known in the North East as "Turtle", because of his curious accent and his habit of being "turtly" behind his now-departed manager, Kevin Keegan.

Hair today

ON THE day that we learned of the probable departure of Stephen Silverne, the House of Commons barber, I can reveal where the true tonsorial power lies under New Labour. MJM of Crawford Street, London, just north of Marble Arch, is where both Tony Blair and Lord Irvine of Lairg (formerly Derry Irvine) have their locks tended.

The PM is a long-time client of Maurice Miller, the salon's owner, although I understand the latter has tended to head along the traffic-clogged Euston Road to Islington for appointments. Information the tabloids would have killed for during that ludicrous pre-election spat over whether Blair had changed his hairstyle — a story which originated, as I recall, in the *Financial Times*.

Loss of power

WHICH captain of industry was gleefully celebrating the downfall of Ian



Helen Shapiro: cool again



"1997 is the year of the fat cat"

Equities shrug off bonds' weakness

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586	1585	1584	1583	1582	1581	1580	1579	1578	1577	1576	1575	1574	1573	1572	1571	1570	1569	1568	1567	1566	1565	1564	1563	1562	1561	1560	1559	1558	1557	1556	1555	1554	1553	1552	1551	1550	1549	1548	1547	1546	1545	1544	1543	1542	1541	1540	1539	1538	1537	1536	1535	1534	1533	1532	1531	1530	1529	1528	1527	1526	1525	1524	1523	1522	1521	1520	1519	1518	1517	1516	1515	1514	1513	1512	1511	1510	1509	1508	1507	1506	1505	1504	1503	1502	1501	1500	1499	1498	1497	1496	1495	1494	1493	1492	1491	1490	1489	1488	1487	1486	1485	1484	1483	1482	1481	1480	1479	1478	1477	1476	1475	1474	1473	1472	1471	1470	1469	1468	1467	1466	1465	1464	1463	1462	1461	1460	1459	1458	1457	1456	1455	1454	1453	1452	1451	1450	1449	1448	1447	1446	1445	1444	1443	1442	1441	1440	1439	1438	1437	1436	1435	1434	1433	1432	1431	1430	1429	1428	1427	1426	1425	1424	1423	1422	1421	1420	1419	1418	1417	1416	1415	1414	1413	1412	1411	1410	1409	1408	1407	1406	1405	1404	1403	1402	1401	1400	1399	1398	1397	1396	1395	1394	1393	1392	1391	1390	1389	1388	1387	1386	1385	1384	1383	1382	1381	1380	1379	1378	1377	1376	1375	1374	1373	1372	1371	1370	1369	1368	1367	1366	1365	1364	1363	1362	1361	1360	1359	1358	1357	1356	1355	1354	1353	1352	1351	1350	1349	1348	1347	1346	1345	1344	1343	1342	1341	1340	1339	1338	1337	1336	1335	1334	1333	1332	1331	1330	1329	1328	1327	1326	1325	1324	1323	1322	1321	1320	1319	1318	1317	1316	1315	1314	1313	1312	1311	1310	1309	1308	1307	1306	1305	1304	1303	1302	1301	1300	1299	1298	1297	1296	1295	1294	1293	1292	1291	1290	1289	1288	1287	1286	1285	1284	1283	1282	1281	1280	1279	1278	1277	1276	1275	1274	1273	1272	1271	1270	1269	1268	1267	1266	1265	1264	1263	1262	1261	1260	1259	1258	1257	1256	1255	1254	1253	1252	1251	1250	1249	1248	1247	1246	1245	1244	1243	1242	1241	1240	1239	1238	1237	1236	1235	1234	1233	1232	1231	1230	1229	1228	1227	1226	1225	1224	1223	1222	1221	1220	1219	1218	1217	1216	1215	1214	1213	1212	1211	1210	1209	1208	1207	1206	1205	1204	1203	1202	1201	1200	1199	1198	1197	1196	1195	1194	1193	1192	1191	1190	1189	1188	1187	1186	1185	1184	1183	1182	1181	1180	1179	1178	1177	1176	1175	1174	1173	1172	1171	1170	1169	1168	1167	1166	1165	1164	1163	1162	1161	1160	1159	1158	1157	1156	1155	1154	1153	1152	1151	1150	1149	1148	1147	1146	1145	1144	1143	1142	1141	1140	1139	1138	1137	1136	1135	1134	1133	1132	1131	1130	1129	1128	1127	1126	1125	1124	1123	1122	1121	1120	1119	1118	1117	1116	1115	1114	1113	1112	1111	1110	1109	1108	1107	1106	1105	1104	1103	1102	1101	1100	1099	1098	1097	1096	1095	1094	1093	1092	1091	1090	1089	1088	1087	1086	1085	1084	1083	1082	1081	1080	1079	1078	1077	1076	1075	1074	1073	1072	1071	1070	1069	1068	1067	1066	1065	1064	1063	1062	1061	1060	1059	1058	1057	1056	1055	1054	1053	1052	1051	1050	1049	1048	1047	1046	1045	1044	1043	1042	1041	1040	1039	1038	1037	1036	1035	1034	1033	1032	1031	1030	1029	1028	1027	1026	1025	1024	1023	1022	1021	1020	1019	1018	1017	1016	1015	1014	1013	1012	1011	1010	1009	1008	1007	1006	1005	1004	1003	1002	1001	1000	999	998	99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■ POP 4

All praise to George Michael, says Caitlin Moran, for proclaiming sane values

Take a mix of this and that

POP ALBUMS: Under its high gloss Gary Barlow's solo debut is a dull affair, says **David Sinclair**

GARY BARLOW
Open Road
(RCA/BMG 74321)

WE KNOW he was the talented one in Take That. And yes, this debut solo album, which was scrapped and then completely re-recorded under the paternalistic eye of executive producer Clive Davis, is about as polished and watertight a vessel as has ever set sail on the placid waters of mainstream pop.

But there is something depressingly workaday about Gary Barlow. Like Elton John without the tantrums or Annie Lennox without the bug-eyed stare, he offers little to latch on to, and for all his obvious ability the absence of personality rubs off on his music.

The George Michael comparisons, although familiar by now, are still apt, and never more so than on the pop-soul sound of Barlow's current hit, *Love Won't Wait* (written by Madonna and Shep Pettibone) and his traditionalist revival of the Johnny Bristol standard, *Hang On In There Baby* (scrupulously produced here by Trevor Horn).

Barlow's own songs, which make up the majority of *Open Road*, tend to be slow ballads with turgid lyrics such as "Love, it has so many beautiful faces" and "You're the girl that I've needed for so long." Some of it is quite pleasant, and he tacks cautiously into a slightly stiffer breeze with the relatively soul-searching lyrics of *Never Knew* and the title track. But moments when the album genuinely comes alive — as when he tackles *Live Down For Love*, an upbeat number co-written by the Spice Girls team of Richard Stannard and Matt Rowe — are disappointingly few and far between.

THE SEAHORSES

Do It Yourself
(Geffen GED-25134, £13.49)
HAVING made a relatively dignified exit from the wreckage of the Stone Roses, guitarist John Squire is to be

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congratulated for getting his new group, the Seahorses, up and running with a minimum of fuss and delay. Unfortunately, there is not much else to congratulate him or anyone else about, so far as this drab *debut album* is concerned.

Despite the charm of the first single, *Love Is The Law*, there is an overwhelming sense of déjà vu about *Do It Yourself*, with songs such as *Round The Universe* and *Standing On Your Head* offering little more than a pick'n'mix compendium of the same old Beatles-influenced tunes, spliced to the sort of hackneyed blues-rock riffing that went out of fashion around the time that Bad Company were formed.

The rest of the band exude the sanguine competence of above average pub-rockers, but there is no fire in their performances or colour in the curiously washed-out vocals of Chris Helme. Crushed by the weight of other people's expectations and hindered by his own apparent lack of musical ambition, Squire has settled for an easy life, and who can blame him?

FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE
Fountains Of Wayne
(Atlantic 7567-92725, £15.49)
OFTEN bracketed with Eels as one of those quirky new groups that are going to restore the tarnished image of post-grunge American rock, Fountains Of Wayne actually have no master plan other

than to write catchy tunes with memorable, storyboard lyrics. Combining a sense of harmony derived from the Beach Boys with the rock'n'roll dynamics of Nirvana, they hit all the right buttons on *Survivor*. Car, a kind of surfing anthem adapted for the inner city ("Riding on the path we made to Union Square"), and their wonderful hit single *Radiation Vibe*.

DAVID BYRNE

Feelings
(Luaka Bop/Warner Bros. 9362-46605, £13.99)
AFTER the stark simplicity of his last, self-titled album, released in 1994, David Byrne has gone for something a bit more weird and wilful on *Feelings*. Even so, at 45, the

former Talking Head still shows no signs of succumbing to middle-aged spread.

Now that everyone is mixing up pop with an exotic cocktail of Central and South American influences, it is nice to be reminded, on *Mis-Adaptation*, that it was Byrne who got there first. But else-

where it is now Byrne who, rather like David Bowie, is jumping aboard handwagons.

Several of the tracks have been produced by British trip-hop collective Morcheeba, who tend to swathe his voice in layers of compression and echo before bringing in such unlikely elements as sitar, dobro and violin to produce the hoe-down from hell on *Daddy Go Down*, for example.

With no lyric sheet, and many of the vocal performances buried at the bottom of the mix, it is hard to know what he is going on about on *Finite*, *Alright* and *Burnt By The Sun*. But unlike the instant fix of most modern pop, this is an album which may take some time fully to surrender its charms.

The group's songwriting team of Chris Collingwood and Adam Schlesinger have a penchant for daft wordplay on tracks that are by turns silly, sad and whimsical, but always modern and exuberantly observed. *Fountains Of Wayne* have tapped the elixir of 1990s vintage American pop with fizz to spare.

1	(5)	Blood on the Dance Floor	Michael Jackson (Epic)
2	(3)	Spice	Spice Girls (Virgin)
3	(2)	Flaming Pie	Paul McCartney (Parlophone)
4	(2)	Republic	Republic (Polygram)
5	(2)	White on Blonde	Teas (Mercury)
6	(2)	The Colour and the Shape	Foo Fighters (Roswell)
7	(2)	Travelling without Moving	Jamiroquai (Sony)
8	(13)	Older	George Michael (Virgin)
9	(1)	Twistin' Stories	Charlene (Epic)
10	(1)	Ocean Drive	Lighthouse Family (Wild Card)

Covering CN * Figure in brackets denotes last week's position

The madness of genius

Following last week's doom'n'gloom session — wherein I relayed the information that three-quarters of the music industry is either a cokey whore braying nonsense at itself nightly, or slumped in a dingy West London flat, managing vast quantities of daytime TV due to big bags of heroin — it is time for the good news

There are sane pop stars! There are musicians who realise that expecting their muse to flourish in the arid, gritty soil of parties and drugs is plainly unfeasible, and that stepping outside the music industry treadmill is a more viable option for artistic longevity.

Consider for instance Julian Cope. His autobiography *Head On* details chasing various members of his band across the Welsh mountain with a shotgun; a "light-hearted" murder attempt on his keyboard-player with a fork; and excesses that would make a sane man, well, attempt to murder his keyboard player with a fork. However, a combination of marriage and divine revelation has led Cope to be one of the sanest, wisest men ever to wear flared, baggy, dyed shorts. He now controls out mail-order albums and publishing his own books. He is also bemused by other artists who continue to believe that being

Not all pop stars are junkies. Some of the biggest are curiously sane

"rock'n'roll" entails being a miserable, messed-up old misery-trousers. As a result, Cope hasn't put out a duff album in ten years.

Michael Stipe is another wise head on spindly shoulders. Despite being one of the most famous artists in the world, he's managed to keep his private life just that — no mean feat when half the world's press want to know if he's gay or not. The intricate

of his lyrics has allowed him to speak freely on a number of issues without ever getting the Moral Majority on his back and, rarely for a pop star, he cherishes friendships and nurtures other artists. He was one of the few people who tried to help Kurt Cobain before his death, and after Cobain killed himself, Stipe became Courtney Love's comforter and Wailing Wall. Stipe also befriended Thom Yorke of Radiohead, at three-quarters of the world (well, sort of) believed *The Bends* was Yorke's suicide note. Stipe has been instrumental in Yorke's new move-

odology in dealing with the press, showed him how to distance himself from his febrile music, and encouraged a further encryption of

However, Yorke now stands alone as one of Pop's Sane Men. Radiohead's forthcoming album, *OK Computer*, is bound to be the Album of the Year, and most of its astonishing vision is due to Yorke's practical contributions.

Remaining in Oxfordshire and openly contemptuous of the cattle-market that, the music industry has turned into, Yorke has fed his muse records and books rather than drugs and gossip, and kept his principles where others have sold them for a two-page spread in *Loaded*.

George Michael's only interview in the last five years has been for *The Big Issue* — but then, he doesn't really need to do interviews any more. After the Sony court-case, wherein he made the point that, if an artist doesn't possess the freedom to make choices, then he's not an artist.

that if the music that he does make doesn't belong to him, then he is to all intents and purposes a slave — Michael now conducts his interviews through his lyrics.

The lyrics to *Star People '97* echo Cope's irritable bemusement about pop stars who revel in being dysfunctional ("Maybe your mama didn't love you enough/It's the same old same old"); and the mere fact that he lives in a modest, slightly messy house that he cleans himself makes him immediately more sane than, say, John Lennon, who sat in an isolated mansion in Wiltshire for four years, and surrounded himself with

Wondered why he went mad.
And finally, Sinead O'Connor. Her most famous statement— "All the troubles in the world are down to child abuse" was howlingly disbelievable as his hysterical ranting at the time. But the truest thing any pop star has ever said. Babies aren't born with their heads are empty, and it's only if they're filled with abuse, be it mental, physical or sexual, that they become twisted adults. O'Connor was realising that being famous was driving her mad, and so sent herself to night-school to study, and concentrated on raising her children.

Do you want to know the maddest thing? Within the industry, all these pop stars

ters hug

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POP 5
Hail to the dark satanic mills: Richard Thompson yearns for manual toil on *Industry*



POP 6
Embrace continue their fast rise, making the McNamara the most talked-about brothers in Britain

THE TIMES ARTS



DANCE
Preparing for the big one: petite Altynai Asylmuratova leads *Swan Lake* to the Albert Hall



THEATRE
Surely that isn't Penelope Keith playing the harlot in *Mrs Warren's Profession*?

Nigel Williamson meets songwriter Richard Thompson

THE artwork for the cover of Richard Thompson's new album *Industry* arrives just as we are discussing his nostalgia for Britain's lost mills, foundries and shipyards. The cover depicts two huge machine cogs, while in the background a dandelion goes to seed signifying decay. "It's too bright. It was meant to be grimmer," complains the songwriter and one-time mainstay of Fairport Convention.

Thompson is big on prime. It closes the pages of his new work, an ambitious song-cycle about the rise and decline of British manufacturing from the Industrial Revolution to the dismantling of heavy industry during the 1980s. "These days Britain is cleaner and we are probably all better off, but it is a bit bland," he says. "I miss the dirt."

Thompson, a quintessentially English writer who has always drawn deeply on tradition, now spends most of his time in California. But the man who "invented" English folk-rock has not turned away from his own heritage. *Industry* tackles such subjects as child labour, factory lockouts, pit closures and long-term unemployment, almost like a musical version of E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*.

Musically, too, the sound is distinctively English. Brass bands, traces of Elgar and folk song are there, evoking not John Major's England of old maids bicycling to evensong but a nation built on working-class toil.

It is hard to think of another contemporary songwriter with the maturity or the confidence to tackle such a vast theme. "We could have made seven albums, there is such a history to write about," says Richard Thompson. "The 'we' refers to musical collaborator Danny Thompson (no relation), the former Pentangle-double bassist whose own roots in Durham mining speak permeate the album."

"We were looking for a project we both felt passionate about," says Richard Thompson. "Then Mick Wadsworth, manager of Scarborough Football Club, sent us some cuttings about the closure of Grimethorpe colliery and the effect it had on the town."

Elegy for the working man

"That led initially to *Last Shift*, a song burning with anger about a society that can consign an entire town to the scrapheap. The miners were fantastic people. Because the job is so dangerous they pulled together in a way that I don't suppose we shall see again. It's not the same if you are



Richard Thompson, muse of the heavy industries

making Toyota cars on an assembly line."

From there it was an easy decision to sustain the industrial theme. "As well as the people I love the industrial landscape and the machinery. It is a shame to see that disappear, and I wanted to write about it."

While making the album Thompson went down a pit for the first time and also dug into libraries of working-class literature. His research produced *Big Chinner*, a song driven by a piston-like rhythm, based on a worker's description of life in a steel mill, while the account of an 18th-century mill worker who felt he was being taken over by the machinery became the

song *Saboteur*. "It is a powerful image," says Thompson. "He takes his hammer and goes down to the engine room to smash it. But he can't do it because he is overcome by the machine's beauty."

If those are the tales of working men, the poignant *Drifting Through The Days* deals with the crushing despair of unemployment. "I feel a fraud over that, because I've never been out of work for two years and felt suicidal about it," says Thompson. "But I wanted to empathise."

Snapshots these may be, but Thompson's lens is sharply focused and he completes the cycle with *Lotteryland*, an acid observation on the twice-weekly national obsession of post-industrial Britain. The song is, in effect, a requiem for the old working class. "It's not an entirely enthusiastic view of Blairism," Thompson concedes. "Perhaps the decline of industry was inevitable for us to arrive in Euro middle-party land. But it is not very exciting. Winning the lottery is the only hope for a lot of people."

Industry is not easy listening, but then there is nothing soft about its subject matter. What stops it from becoming mere polemic is the compassion running through the songs. "The sympathy of the songs is with working people and their communities," Thompson says. "But the manner in which industry was destroyed makes me angry. Social change happens and you cannot stop it, but it makes you angry to see politicians working insensitively."

The Thompsons are performing *Industry* on tour this week. Catch them now, for these are the only live outings the album is likely to enjoy. Already Richard is immersed in his next project, which delves even further back into English history. "I'm working with Phil Pickett and the New London Consort who specialise in early music, but we are adding a rhythm section. I call it heavy metal medieval."

Industry is on Parlophone. Richard Thompson and Danny Thompson are at Blackheath Concert Hall (tonight, tomorrow); Nottingham Theatre Royal (Sun); Leeds Irish Centre (Mon); Newcastle Playhouse (Tue)

Brothers hug the limelight

THE last time Embrace played at ULU, they were fourth on the bill to Kenickie, playing in front of 40 people. It was not a bad turn-out for the band's second London show, but it simply wasn't good enough for front man Danny McNamara. So he walked off stage after just four songs.

Five months later, it is a completely different story. The McNamaras — Richard plays guitar — are the most talked-about new brothers in Britain and, this week, Embrace's *Fireworks* EP went straight into the Top 40.

Few rock'n'roll bands would dare to open with a ballad, but Embrace kick off with the slowest, most aching song in their set, the country bruised

Embrace
University of London Union, WCI

blues of *Retread*. They follow it with *All You Good Good People*, the huge, uplifting hymn that made them stand out from every other new band in years. As it fades out, Danny McNamara sheds his jacket like a dead skin and affords himself a rare public smile. "Number 34 in the charts this week," he tells the crowd.

He sounds triumphant, but he knows that Embrace won't be hanging around the lower reaches of the charts for long.

As if to signal further intent, they play *Now You're Nobody*, which sounds like a collision between Elvis Presley's *Suspicious Minds* and the Stone Roses — the kind of company Embrace have always intended to keep.

It is difficult to pinpoint what makes this band special until you realise that they never settle into any particular mood — combining psychedelia with arms-aflot anthems and heartbreaking ballads, yet never having the audience's attention anything less than completely rapt. "I want to get people," Danny McNamara once said. "Just get them." Tonight, he did that.

ANN SCANTON

Leader of the flock

DANCE:
Debra Craine meets the swan out to captivate an Albert Hall audience of 5,000

THIS will be a *Swan Lake* whose statistics are designed to impress. A cast of 120 dancers, a wardrobe of 250 costumes, 150 pairs of tights, more than 4,000 beads and 5,000 metres of braid. With a budget of £1.8 million, it is surely the most expensive ballet ever staged in Britain. And the icing on the cake? Only the best Odette-Odile in the business.

She is Altynai Asylmuratova, prima ballerina of the Kirov and the world's foremost swan, a dancer so divine she has been known to reduce even the most hardened critics to a blubbering gush of superlatives. Now Britain is welcoming her back as the star guest of English National Ballet's *Swan Lake*, which comes to the Albert Hall next week.

Derek Deane, ENB's artistic director, is staging Tchaikovsky's ballet in the round, with the unique performing space of the Albert Hall in mind. Seventy swans will circle the stage — more than twice as many as in conventional productions — and special effects will play to the arena's cavernous interior. In the midst of it all, on opening night, will be Asylmuratova.

The 36-year-old Russian has probably danced the dual role of Odette-Odile more than 300 times in her career. But never has she performed it in the round, and never in front of so huge an audience.

"I have never danced before 5,000 people before," she says. "But I am not about to change my interpretation because of the space. If you've got something to give, it will be felt and seen, no matter how big the theatre. If you haven't, it won't make any difference. But," she adds, taking another drag on her cigarette, "I may have to give up smoking in order to be physically fit enough to get around the building."

Asylmuratova, who has danced *Swan Lake* with American Ballet Theatre in New York, with the Paris Opera and the Royal Ballet, has never forgotten the special place Odette-Odile inhabits in her repertoire. "I started with *Swan Lake*, it was my examination performance. My teacher said that if you can dance *Swan Lake* you are a ballerina. If not..."

At the Albert Hall.



Altynai Asylmuratova: "I may have to stop smoking to be fit enough to get around the stage"

Asylmuratova is dancing four performances — including the gala on June 3 in the presence of Diana, Princess of Wales — with Roberto Bolle from La Scala in Milan as her Siegfried. The two had never met before rehearsals, but Asylmuratova enjoys the challenge of an unfamiliar face. "I very much like anything new. It's always very interesting to start up a new relationship, to see how it comes out on stage."

London is also special to her. Her three-year-old daughter Anastasia was born here; and it is the home of Covent Garden. Asylmuratova appeared as a guest artist

at the Royal Opera House on a fairly regular basis in the early Nineties, a period she looks back on with real fondness. She loved dancing the Ashton and MacMillan ballets — those who saw it will never forget her Manon — and one senses her disappointment that a more permanent relationship with the Royal Ballet did not develop. Instead, it

was lucky France which snapped her up — Asylmuratova spends six months a year with Roland Petit's company in Marseilles.

"I look for work in the West, not just in England but in France, because I want to do something new. I love classical ballet; I love my theatre. But I cannot stay in the same place, always doing the same thing."

What she needs now, she says, is to have ballets made specially for her. Remarkably, no choreographer has ever taken advantage of Asylmuratova's extraordinary talents.

Despite her travels abroad in search of artistic adventures, home is still the Kirov (where a top star like Asylmuratova earns only \$200 a month), and when the St Petersburg company returns to London in July, Asylmuratova will be at the Coliseum dancing with her Russian colleagues.

She is profoundly committed to her art form and devoted to the Maryinsky Theatre, home of the Kirov, even though she has frequently been outspoken in her criticism of the Kirov's outgoing artistic director, Oleg Vinogradov. But change is in the air at the Maryinsky, and these days Asylmuratova prefers to look to the future rather than dwell on the mistakes of the past. Still, she does worry about the way ballet is changing in her homeland. "The younger generation are all very tall, technical dancers. The Western craze for technical overstatement has hit Russia and ballerinas have jumped on that bandwagon somewhat belatedly."

Young dancers today, she says, don't have time to mature. "Before they were used to ripening slowly; now they tend to peak a bit too soon. It's much easier now to be a ballerina. I was in the corps de ballet for five years; I worked my way up slowly and I had to prove myself at every stage."

"Sure, young dancers today have better physiques, but what is a ballerina? It's not about having a great physique; it's not about gymnastics. It is about everything: intelligence, emotion, physicality, all these things go into making a ballerina."

In the post-Communist economic climate, Russian audiences have changed, too. "It's not the same public any more. The true ballet-lovers are usually not from the wealthy class; they cannot afford a ticket. And the people who can afford tickets aren't really interested in ballet; they just wish to be seen in the theatre. A lot of my fans have made special sacrifices and perhaps have even gone to the length of not eating for several days in order to afford a ticket. But they still always bring me flowers."

Swan Lake is at the Albert Hall (071-589 5212) from Thursday to June 11

Unlikely madam

SHAW rightly made a meal of the fact that his 1894 play was banned by the Lord Chamberlain and only publicly performed in England 30 years after it was written. One hundred and three years later, Alan Strachan's production (sponsored by Barclays Stage Partners) makes a strong case for why Shaw's potboiler should still shock the unsuspecting theatregoer. Unfortunately this is due almost entirely to the fact that the prostitute who thinks virtuously of her daughter's future while she is being manhandled for money is none other than Penelope Keith.

As a comic actress Keith has always been a class apart, and usually several feet above, her boorish male victims. As the soft-hearted opportunist Mrs Warren, she hovers above the hypocritical code of male society but she also provides one of the most improbable couplings of character and actress I've ever seen. To proposition Keith's brothel keeper would be like asking a revered maiden aunt for a quick tumble in the church vestry before Benediction. This fact is presumably not lost on Robert Hand's young Frank Gardner when he squeezes what can only be described as the most chaste of French kisses out of her in the Warrens' kitchen when he should be doing on her rigidly principled daughter, Vivie.

Having sanded her accent down to something mawkish from the Lionel Bart school of cockney — all cackle and dropped Hs — Keith's Mrs Warren plays the dowdy co-

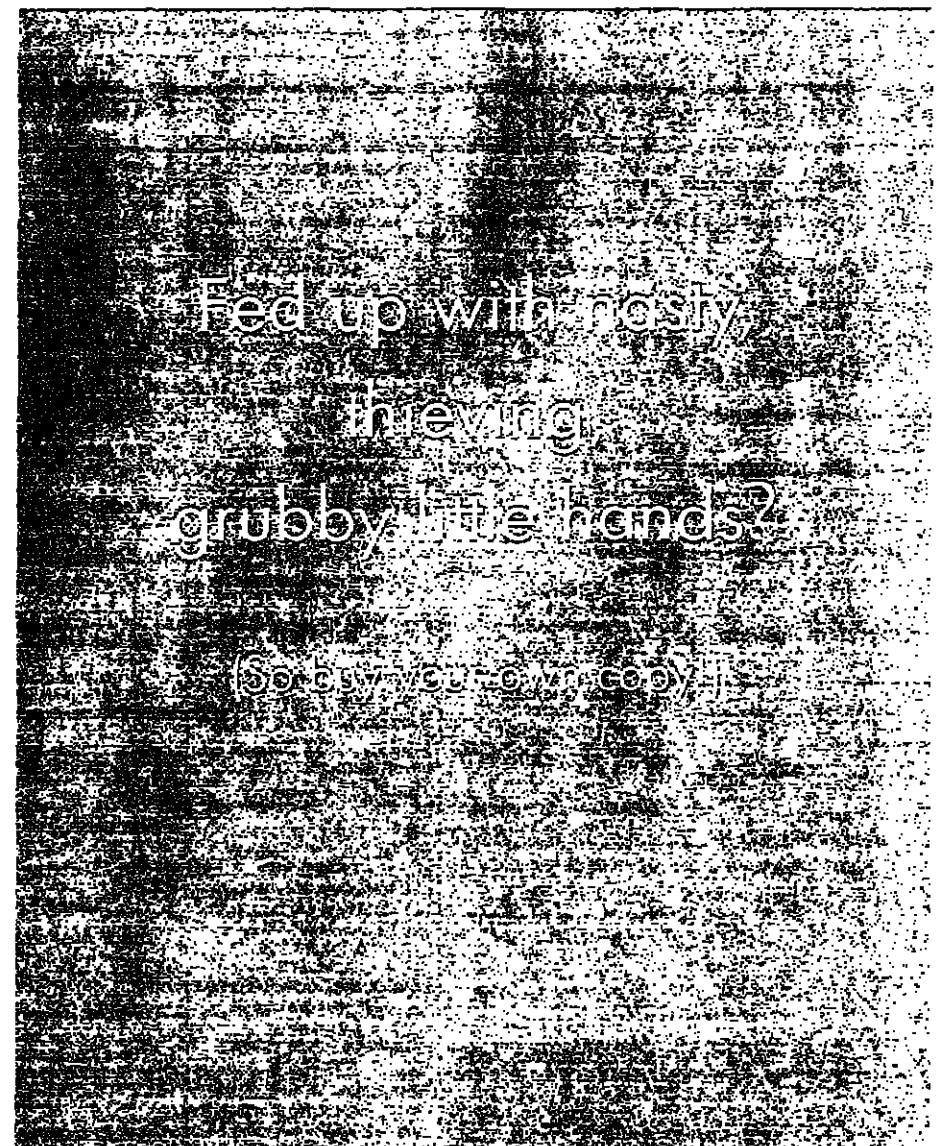
THEATRE
Mrs Warren's Profession
Richmond Theatre

quette in front of her clapped-out clients; and the doughy mother from the mean streets for the benefit of her daughter. But her performance is a pyrrhic triumph of charisma over credulity.

The real punches are thrown by Carolyn Backhouse's breathtakingly severe Vivie. If her ignorance about her mother's profession provides the heavy-handed irony of the first half, it's her horrific rejection of her mother in the final act that puts some much-needed steel into Strachan's blousy production. To this end Denis Lill's dastardly Sir George Crofts impressively paves the way, impaling insects on his walking stick while angling for Vivie's hand in marriage. For Lill's greying Crofts the moral snobbery that Vivie has refined in Cambridge is no more or less hypocritical than his own dirty laundry. Their face-off is the production's best moment.

The rest is dry as gin. Hands provides a little tonic as Vivie's frivolous and petulant boyfriend. But Strachan needs something stronger than tonic to lift his production out of the ordinary. Several sticks of dynamite perhaps.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER



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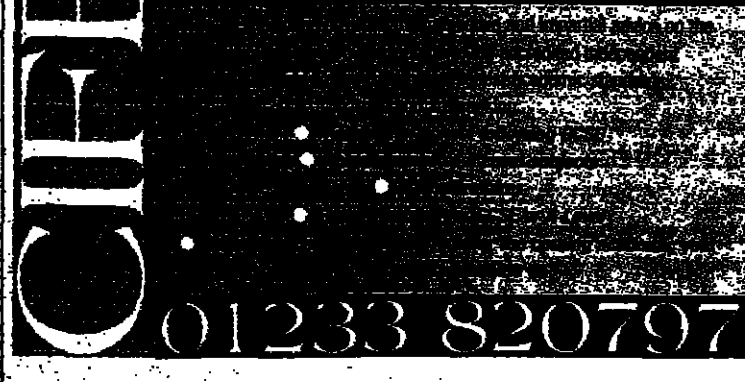
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Further particulars are available from the Master's Secretary, Balliol College, Oxford OX1 3BJ. The closing date for applications is 24 June 1997.

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Further information from the Headmaster's Secretary, St. Olaves Grammar School, Goddington Lane, Orpington, Kent BR6 9SH. Telephone 01689 820101 Fax 01689 897943.

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The Good University Guide

Cambridge once again heads the *The Times* league table. John O'Leary, the Education Editor, assesses this year's results



World leader: Cambridge has the best record in the assessments of teaching carried out by leading academics for the three funding councils

The Light Blues lengthen their academic lead

Nothing seems to shift Cambridge from the top of our university league table. A new round of assessment and changes in the indicators used to compile *The Times* ranking have caused plenty of movement further down the table, but have only served to widen the Light Blues' lead over Oxford.

The two ancient universities remain close together: a gap of only 19 points out of 1,000 spread across eight aspects of campus life confirms that there are more similarities than differences between them. But Cambridge topped four of the individual rankings in Oxford's two.

Most significantly, Cambridge had the best record in the assessments of teaching

carried out by leading academics for the three funding councils. Although not yet complete, the assessments cover a sufficiently wide range of subjects to present a fair reflection of each university. As the main activity in undergraduate education, this has been given the highest weighting in this year's table.

The two traditional rivals are inseparable in terms of entry requirements, but Cambridge topped the research category, which is the other indicator to be given a high weighting this year. Oxford won more top ratings in last December's research ratings, but was overhauled because Cambridge entered more of its academics for assessment.

Only Surrey and Imperial College London managed to

break the Oxbridge stranglehold. Surrey confirmed a long-standing reputation as an employers' favourite by topping the table for graduate destinations, while Imperial again registered the best staffing levels.

At the head of the table, Warwick and Durham both moved up three places. But Glasgow Caledonian's climb of 28 positions is the most spectacular this year, followed closely by Keele's 25-place rise. Both have registered much higher scores for staffing and library spending.

As last year, Oxford Brookes was the highest-placed new university, in 56th place. However, still none of the former polytechnics can match the traditional universities, where the standard of many facilities reflect the preferential funding they enjoyed before the higher education system was unified in 1992. Lincolnshire and Humberside remain at the foot of the table, partly because some of the data in the table reflects the university's transition to a split-site institution. The most up-to-date information possible has been used, but the guide's production schedule meant that some recently published statistics could not be included.

The indicators used to compile the overall ranking of universities have been completely reviewed since last year, in consultation with a number of academics and university administrators. Overseas students have been dropped as a category in the table because it was felt that their numbers had become as much a measure of recruitment activity and location as of international reputation. The value-added measure has been suspended because

of difficulties in its calculation. Like student completion rates, which had to be dropped last year because of inadequate data, it is hoped to restore the indicator in 1998.

One unavoidable consequence of the extra emphasis on funding council assessments has been to exclude Buckingham University from the exercise. Buckingham is well regarded academically and compares favourably with others for graduate employ-

'Nothing seems to shift Cambridge from the top'

ment, accommodation, staffing levels and library spending. As a private university, however, Buckingham's departments are not assessed and it is impossible to produce a rating.

As in previous years, other famous names, such as Cranfield University and the London Business School, are also absent from the ranking because they are wholly or predominantly postgraduate institutions. The Open University is omitted because it restricts itself to distance education.

In order to keep it to a manageable size, the guide also omits the many colleges which run degree courses. The Dearing report, which is due out in July, will look again at the status of university col-

leges, several of which have registered notable successes in the official assessments of teaching quality. For the moment, however, our rankings are confined to institutions with full university status.

Like the rest of the material published in this week's university guide, the table will remain available in the Internet edition of *The Times* (web address: <http://www.the-times.co.uk>). A special Information Times section, which also includes links to last year's tables, will provide easy access to the data.

Fuller information and advice on applications is contained in the paperback book, *The Times Good University Guide*, published by HarperCollins. Some scores have been updated since the book went to press, and subsequent editions will contain the rankings published here.

The table is intended as a starting point for students considering higher education, giving a broad indication of a university's standing. However, such an exercise cannot give a definitive picture of an institution, and the component parts should provide scope for more detailed investigation.

In spite of the economies forced on universities in recent years, British higher education is held in high esteem internationally, with some institutions recognised as world leaders.

A report this week by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found no slackening in the financial benefits of higher education. Men with a degree earned 15 per cent more than others of similar intelligence and family background, while female graduates earned 35 per cent more than their less-qualified counterparts.

THE TIMES 1997 LEAGUE TABLE HOW THE UNIVERSITIES SCORED

	Teaching	Research	Library	Staffing	Graduate destinations	Value added	International	Accommodation	Student satisfaction	Overall
1 Cambridge	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2 Oxford	91	96	100	95	100	98	98	91	97	98
3 Imperial	92	85	79	100	95	72	94	67	89	89
4 LSE	92	98	95	92	81	78	80	68	84	84
5 Warwick	84	85	71	90	72	82	81	68	87	87
6 York	89	79	71	92	71	78	73	62	80	80
7 UCL	89	89	89	89	71	77	74	63	80	80
8 St Andrews	90	72	71	88	68	81	83	100	73	73
9 Durham	85	72	70	88	71	78	78	76	78	78
10 Edinburgh	85	79	78	87	73	80	82	65	87	87
11 Bristol	80	75	74	78	72	81	76	70	74	74
12 Liverpool	81	78	72	85	70	82	88	60	75	75
13 Nottingham	78	82	71	75	69	84	78	72	78	78
14 Bath	72	78	78	85	71	72	73	64	79	79
15 King's College	78	89	75	81	69	72	73	64	79	79
16 Sheffield	86	70	71	88	67	72	69	70	73	73
17 Manchester	79	76	70	88	71	80	71	71	75	75
18 Birmingham	77	68	75	82	71	81	75	65	73	73
19 Southampton	81	68	71	82	71	81	80	68	73	73
20 Essex	70	78	71	88	70	73	77	78	73	73
21 Reading	88	62	72	82	69	81	72	71	73	73
22 Newcastle	88	64	72	82	69	81	72	71	73	73
23 Glasgow	78	83	73	82	71	78	88	62	70	70
24 UMIST	84	78	72	82	67	84	78	73	69	69
25 Keele	85	61	71	72	63	71	85	60	68	68
26 East Anglia	84	68	70	82	65	82	83	57	70	70
Surrey	86	64	64	82	65	85	85	100	80	80
28 Royal Holloway	71	68	78	82	69	74	78	71	73	73
29 Aberdeen	72	61	68	82	71	77	72	68	68	68
30 Stirling	88	55	64	82	68	83	88	70	71	71
Loughlin	80	68	68	70	70	68	68	72	68	68
32 Hull	74	62	64	82	68	80	79	79	68	68
33 Loughborough	88	58	62	82	68	83	79	80	68	68
34 Cardiff	88	71	71	82	62	88	82	72	68	68
35 Dundee	84	55	64	82	73	82	73	63	68	68
36 Leeds	74	70	71	82	79	73	83	68	67	67
37 Exeter	88	58	64	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
38 Liverpool	75	61	71	82	68	83	83	70	67	67
39 Queen's, Belfast	74	62	71	82	68	83	83	70	67	67
Sussex	84	74	71	82	72	71	83	69	68	68
41 Swansea	88	53	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
42 Kent	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
43 Staffordshire	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
44 Aston	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
45 City	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
Queen Mary and Westfield	77	62	71	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
47 Bangor	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
48 Aberystwyth	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
49 London Goldsmiths	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
51 Brunel	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
52 Loughlin	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
53 Bradford	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
54 Ulster	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
55 Bedford	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
56 Oxford Brookes	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
57 Northumbria at Newcastle	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
58 Robert Gordon	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
59 Sheffield Hallam	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
60 West of England, Bristol	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
61 Portsmouth	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
62 Hertfordshire	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
63 Plymouth	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
64 Nottingham Trent	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
65 Brighton	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
66 Coventry	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
67 Glasgow Caledonian	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
68 Anglia	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
69 Greenwich	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
70 Kingston	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
Central England in Education	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
72 Napier	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
73 Huddersfield	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
De Montfort	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
75 Manchester Metropolitan	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
Liverpool John Moores	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
North London	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
78 Westminster	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
79 Teesside	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
80 Central Lancashire	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
81 Thermal Valley	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
Glasgow	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
83 Middlesex	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
84 Leeds Metropolitan	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
85 Wolverhampton	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
86 Aberystwyth	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
87 Derby	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
88 Staffordshire	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
89 Paisley	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
East London	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
91 Bournemouth	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
92 Sunderland	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
93 South Bank	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
94 London Guildhall	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
95 Luton	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67
96 Lincolnshire and Humberside	88	58	62	82	68	83	83	72	67	67

ANOTHER FIRST FOR EAST LONDON

The University of East London is building a brand new campus in London's burgeoning Docklands. Waterfront accommodation for our students will overlook Europe's newest international rowing course.

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UNIVERSITY of EAST LONDON UEL

A 'poll of polls', based on published statistics, is used to determine each university's position in the table

How rankings are decided

THE OVERALL ranking of universities is compiled entirely from published statistics. Placings are determined by a 'poll of polls', in which the results from the eight indicators are converted into a points score and aggregated.

Data was supplied by the Higher Education Statistics Agency on staffing levels, accommodation, degree classifications and graduate employment. These figures relate to 1994-95, the most up-to-date statistics available when the deadline passed for the compilation of *The Times Good University Guide*.

The other sources of information are the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (for entry grades), the Standing Conference of National and University Libraries (for library spending), and the three higher education funding councils

for the teaching and research assessment. None of the organisations was involved in aggregating or manipulating the data, and are not responsible for any inferences or conclusions drawn from the statistics.

The ranking was compiled by Dr Bernard Kingston, Dr Andrew Hindmarsh and Professor Bob Loyne, university experts in careers, admissions and statistics. The top university in each element of the table is awarded 100 points, with the remainder receiving a proportion based on their unadjusted score.

Scores for teaching and research have been weighted to reflect their importance in undergraduate educa-

tion. The teaching scores above are multiplied by 25 and those for research by 15.

The teaching scores represent an average of the grades awarded by funding council assessors. The separate councils for Scotland, Wales and England (which also covers the two universities in Northern Ireland) now all use different grading systems. For the purpose of this exercise, English departments awarded 22 points or more were regarded as 'excellent', while 20 points became the equivalent of Scotland's 'highly satisfactory' grade.

Similarly, the research scores rep-

resent an average of the grades awarded in the 1996 Research Assessment Exercise. In order to give a complete picture of departments, the ranking is based on the average grade for all staff, not just those entered for assessment.

The entry grades used are the median requirement in a range of mainstream subjects published in the Ucas guide for entry in 1997. Staff/student ratios are based on all academic staff and full-time equivalent student numbers for courses other than those franchised to other institutions. Library spending is also calculated per student.

For the first time, the indicator for

degree classifications includes both firsts and upper-second. The intention is to iron out differences in awarding policies between universities. The basis of calculation of graduate employment has also changed this year because the proportion of unknown destinations was not released. The ranking is based on the proportion of home students taking up employment or going on to further study.

The figure for accommodation represents the proportion of students in residential accommodation maintained by the university concerned. The HESA acknowledged that its first year of data contained a number of anomalies, and this applied particularly to accommodation. Some changes were agreed with universities after the publication of the guide went to press.

THE TIMES The Good University Guide

Details of subject grading

TWO errors appeared in the 23 subject rankings published on Tuesday and Wednesday. Reading University was omitted from the Italian table and Essex from law.

Reading's Italian department, which was graded 5 for research and scored 20 for teaching, should have appeared in equal seventh place in the subject table.

Essex should have appeared in place of Sussex University in fifteenth place for law, having achieved a Grade 5 for research and been rated excellent for teaching.

Twelve of the subject tables were based on grades awarded by the English, Scottish and Welsh funding councils.

Only results from England were available for anthropology, chemical engineering and linguistics. In geology, just the English and Scottish assessments were complete.

Assessments in Scotland were not available in a number of subjects so Scottish universities were not included in the tables for French, German, English, Iberian Studies, Italian, Russian and Social Policy.

Eight computing departments were named as excellent for teaching. There are five more: Southampton, Exeter, Kent, Swansea and Teesside.

David Charter on the reasons for the popularity of a politics course

THE chance to spend four months working with an American congressman and a further four months with an MP have helped to make a politics course at Leeds University one of the most oversubscribed in Britain.

More than 300 people applied for nine places on the politics and parliamentary studies course, a ratio far above the national average of 5.5 applications for politics course places.

The four-year course includes a placement with an MP's office at Westminster and a similar position in Washington, DC, attached to the Catholic University of America, or the Canadian Parliament, with Carleton University in Ottawa. Students have landed placements with a range of leading politicians, from Tony Blair, MP, to Sir Edward Heath, MP.

Chris Leslie, MP, who graduated three years ago, became the course's first alumni MP, and Parliament's youngest, when he won Shipley for Labour. Other graduates end up on the fast track in the media, local government and political consultancies. Mr Leslie's placement in Westminster was with Gordon Brown, MP, now the Chancellor of the Exchequer. "I did a lot of paper-pushing as well as more in-depth research for him," he says. "It was hard work, but so worthwhile. It shows you how the system works. I am 24, but I am not a novice because I know how Parliament works."

Ed Gough, the course tutor, tasted politics as a councillor on the former Greater London Council and studied for his Masters in European politics at the London School of Economics.

In on the ground floor



Sir Edward Heath, left, and Clare Short, right, have hosted students. Chris Leslie MP, centre, is a graduate

before joining the politics department at Leeds.

The popularity of the course and high calibre of applicants makes selecting the lucky nine an ordeal. "After going through all the applications seven or eight times, we interview about 20 for the nine places," Mr Gough says.

The first hurdle is A-level grades — applicants must be predicted at least three Bs. Last year 80 candidates were forecast three As. Secondly, Mr Gough wants personality. Introverts would find it tough organising their own placement in the Canadian Parliament. "The third factor is whether they have been involved in organisations such as a political party or something like Greenpeace or local voluntary groups," he says. "We are now getting quite a few people who have already done a period of work shadowing an MP. They also have to demonstrate a day-to-day interest in politics. Finally,

we like to get a balance of men and women and people nationwide."

The limited number of places will increase in October when the course takes its first five students to study Russian politics.

The opportunities are amazing, a fact not lost on current fourth-year students. Hannah Morgan, 21, with

two As and a C at A level, spent four months in Washington, DC, with a congressman and has just finished a placement with Clare Short, MP.

"I did some work for the local Labour Party, but I think I got a place on the course just because of my enthusiasm for politics," she says. "With Clare Short, I was doing everything from answering the phone to constituency casework, with her policy researcher. It helps you to learn how the system works and gives you so much experience before you graduate."

Jay Dossener, 21, spent his third year in Ottawa and then in the office of Sir Edward Heath. "I don't know why they chose me for the course. I am probably more right-wing in my politics than the others and was the only one who wanted to work with a Tory, although they did not expressly say that was a factor. I was not involved directly in politics before and all I had done was edit the school magazine."

POPULAR SUBJECTS

Table shows the ratio of applications to acceptances in 1996 for the most oversubscribed subjects

Subject	Ratio
Junior school education	15.4:1
Journalism	14.5:1
Pre-clinical dentistry	14.5:1
Cinematics	12.3:1
Veterinary science	12.3:1
Pre-clinical medicine	12.2:1
Nursery/infant education	11.0:1
Fine arts	10.7:1
Nursing	10.3:1
Pharmacy	10.3:1
All-subject average	6.8:1

St Andrews turns the tables on Edinburgh

CHANGING PLACES

CONSISTENT all-round performances from the leading universities in the English provinces (excluding London and Oxbridge), in Scotland and among the former polytechnics give the tables a familiar look this year.

However, while many of the institutions in the respective top tens remain the same, there are some notable changes. In Scotland, the ascendancy of St Andrews continues. Britain's third most ancient university has pipped Edinburgh for top spot.

St Andrews owes its position to the best score for student accommodation, as well as a strong performance in teaching.

Edinburgh performed better for research, with 47 per cent of work graded 5 or better compared with 29 per cent at St Andrews.

Glasgow Caledonian rises from 95th in the main table to 67th — the highest rise overall — because of improved scores for accommodation, library spending and staff/student ratios.

Warwick reasserts its place at the top of the provincial table ahead of York, which held top spot last year. York has the highest provincial rating for teaching and Warwick the highest for research.

Warwick entered 98 per cent of all academic staff for the Research Assessment Exercise and half of its research activity was judged to be grade 5 or 5*.

Lancaster's good showing for research, with 44 per cent of work graded a 5 or 5*, helped it from tenth to fifth place in the provincial table. Sheffield enters the provincial top ten, helped by its strong record for undergraduate teaching.

Oxford Brookes confirms its place as the top new

university, helped by the joint highest marks among former polytechnics for research and the second highest for teaching. Oxford Brookes entered almost half of its academic staff for research assessment, a feat bettered only by De Montfort, and two-thirds of those gained a grade 3 or better.

Kingston falls from second to twelfth place among the new universities and is replaced in second place by Northumbria, which recorded the second best score for staff/student ratios and fourth best for teaching. The University of the West of England rose from tenth last time to fifth, thanks to the best performance in teaching of any new university.

DAVID CHARTER

THE TOP TENS

NEW UNIVERSITIES

- 1 Oxford Brookes (1)
- 2 Northumbria (6)
- 3 Robert Gordon (4)
- 4 Sheffield Hallam (4)
- 5 West of England (10)
- 6 Portsmouth (8)
- 7 Hertfordshire (10)
- 8 Plymouth (8)
- 9 Nottingham Trent (10)
- 10 Brighton (10), Coventry (3)

ENGLISH PROVINCIALS

- 1 Warwick (2)
- 2 York (1)
- 3 Durham (5)
- 4 Bristol (2)
- 5 Lancaster (10)
- 6 Nottingham (2)
- 7 Bath (5)
- 8 Sheffield (11)
- 9 Manchester (5)
- 10 Birmingham (10)

SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES

- 1 St Andrews (1)
- 2 Edinburgh (1)
- 3 Glasgow (3)
- 4 Aberdeen (6)
- 5 Stirling (5)
- 6 Dundee (4)
- 7 Strathclyde (7)
- 8 Heriot-Watt (8)
- 9 Robert Gordon (9)
- 10 Glasgow Caledonian (13)

Last year's positions in brackets

When access is an issue

THE best university in the world is no help to the student who cannot make use of its facilities. That is why the universities of Bath, Bristol and the West of England are establishing a £250,000 Regional Access Centre for disabled people this summer.

The main centre will be based at the West of England's main campus, in Bristol. This will also co-ordinate services for wheelchair-bound and visually impaired students studying at any of the three partner universities. A satellite centre at Bristol University will co-ordinate services for the deaf, while Bath will concentrate on meeting the needs of dyslexic students.

Leila Edwards, Bath's dean of students, says: "Though we have no conclusive figures to illustrate the extent of dyslexia

HELP FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

at this university, we believe that about 70 students are affected each year. Part of the centre's task will be to make academic staff more aware of dyslexia. If tutors find that they have students with high IQs who are under-performing in reading, spelling or short-term memory skills, they can refer them to the centre."

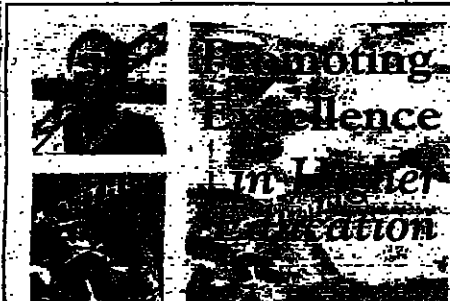
Another of the access centre's objectives is to establish joint research into disability needs throughout all three universities. But the expertise available at the centre will not be limited to the three universities' staff and students.

Sandie Cusack, the West of England's project co-ordinator, says: "We also intend to offer our services to disabled

available, such as Bristol." The access centre has received inaugural funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

All three universities hope to complete each assessment within a fortnight of a student coming forward to seek help.

IOLA SMITH



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ASSOCIATION OF ACCOUNTING TECHNICIANS

Body with strength in numbers

Robert Bruce on how a group grew to boast 25,000 members

The Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) is one of the great achievements of the British accounting profession. It provides both an examination system and professional back-up for anyone who wants to make a career in the second tier of accountancy work — from bookkeeper to financial manager. Its 25,000 members work everywhere from large accounting firms to small companies.

The success of the AAT can be measured in its member and student numbers. When it was formed in 1980, as a result of merging the profession's

two existing second-tier bodies, it had about 18,000 students and 5,000 members. Now it has more than 61,000 students and recently gained its 25,000th member.

But its greatest achievement lies in providing people with an opportunity they otherwise would not have. In 1980 the two main professional bodies that trained accounting technicians got together and showed how far-sighted the accounting profession can be. The late Eric Sayers, president of the English Institute of Chartered Accountants, and Edmund Gibbs, one of the greatest of the presidents of the Certified



Hannah Tonge, right, teaches accounts to Abu Aisha. Ms Tonge's work at the Manchester Deaf Centre earned her this year's AAT Past President's Award

Accountants, set up the AAT in the recognition that it made no sense at all for there to be different qualifications for accounting staff. They recognised people wanting to gain a qualification at the accounting support staff level would be helped immeasurably if there was one universally recognised qualification. They believed such a structure would help to build a strong profes-

sional body which would establish post-qualification training systems. It also provided a qualification route and a strong professional body for accounting support staff around the world. It has added to this in recent years by allying its qualifications to the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) scheme and with developing the idea of a Modern Apprenticeship in Accounting.

Since the beginning of this year, appropriately qualified self-employed fellow members of the AAT have been approved to act as "reporting accountants" under the Department of Trade and Industry's crusade to free small companies from the burden of a full audit.

There is still much growth ahead. The AAT has to create more ways in which students can train, either on their own or within the organisations for which they work. And there are, as John Newman, the AAT's president, says, many more people who would benefit from what the association has to offer.

"I believe that there are many more opportunities for accounting technicians in the workplace," he says. The advent of a Modern Apprenticeship in Accounting will mean the AAT can provide the NVQs and accreditation to lead towards that goal.

Equally, the AAT is looking

at specialist training needs. As the Treasury pilots the scheme to turn the British Civil Service from relatively primitive cash accounting methods to the same sort of accrual accounting principles the rest of the world has been using for generations, it must ensure that such a change goes through as smoothly as possible.

Also, the AAT is helping to train middle managers in budgeting and costing, and has created a joint certificate with the Treasury for such training. According to Jane Scott Paul, the AAT's secretary, "Many other government departments are now interested in developing similar schemes."

Such initiatives also exist in the profession. "There is," says Miss Scott Paul, "an opportunity for specialised training."

One challenge the AAT faces is the recent announcement by one of its founder bodies, the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants, that it would set up its own competing qualification. Its announcement surprised the profession, but the view is that the AAT has the strength to prevail in any future competition for members.

"I am confident that we will overcome," says John Newman in his president's report this year.

From truncheons to spreadsheets

Crime statistics were no substitute for Anne

Gascoigne's love of accounting, says Rodney Hobson

ANNE GASCOIGNE could not make up her mind whether she wanted to be a policewoman or an accountant. Short of joining the fraud squad, it was difficult to combine the two and, for a time, the police won.

"It could have gone either way, but I joined the police cadets at the age of 16," she says. "It seems more attractive, more exciting, when you are young."

Now Mrs Gascoigne, who has two sons aged nine and five, looks after the accounts for a primary school in Grantham, Lincolnshire. After taking a three-year course at Grantham College, she became the 25,000th member of the Association of Accounting Technicians.

Mrs Gascoigne comes from Gainsborough, north-west Lincolnshire. With eight GCSEs, she could have continued her studies instead of joining the police. However, she made the grade as a cadet and after two years she became a fully fledged policewoman, serving at Skegness and then Boston, where she met her husband Nigel, also a constable.

After spending seven years in the police force, Mrs Gascoigne had her first son and took her first step into the business world. "I ran my own business with a knitting machine, designing and making clothes," she says. "It was a very small-scale cottage industry, but it got me interested in accounting again."

The clothes venture came to an end when Mr Gascoigne was posted to Grantham, but when their second child was six months old, a new opportunity arose. "A friend asked me to



Anne Gascoigne recalls her days in the police force

go with her to an open evening at the college," she says. "I went along and signed up for a three-year accountancy course. I had the option of just doing the first year, so I thought I would play it by ear. My younger son was a year old."

THE first year comprised a one-day release course from 9am-8.30pm. "Although the college had good canteen facilities, I did not want to put my son in to start with as he was so young," says Mrs Gascoigne. "Because my husband worked shifts, he was able to look after him most of the time, and my husband's parents helped us." The course was intended for people who were

working and in the third year Mrs Gascoigne found a part-time job that provided an opportunity to put what she was learning at college into practice. "You really needed to be in a work environment," she says. "It was only a very small company but it made the course a lot easier."

Mrs Gascoigne is now school secretary at Gonerby Hill Primary School, Grantham, where more than half her job involves a knowledge of accounts. Much as she enjoys her work, she may take up her accountancy studies again. "Accountancy is in my blood. I am itching to do more, but I will have to wait until my younger son is older."

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ASSOCIATION OF ACCOUNTING TECHNICIANS

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Transformed by the digital revolution

Every aspect of accountancy has seen dramatic changes in recent years thanks to tax and computers

Accountancy now is a far cry from the early Eighties when the chartered bodies decided to set up the Association of Accounting Technicians, claims John Newman, who completes his year of office as president of the AAT today. Rodney Hobson writes.

The chartered bodies merged their competing accounting technicians' qualifications because the numbers, taking each examination at that time were uneconomic. "About ten years ago a personal computer on every desk was a futurologist's dream, but now it is commonplace," Mr Newman says. "This is just one example of how the framework of business is changing. The role of the accountant and the accounting technician has also changed. There are no ledgers any more, no punch-card systems. Even the smallest business is effectively computerised."

There has also been a change in the nature of business and commerce. There has been a wholesale shift to quality service that has affected the nature and type of accountant and accounting technician.

There is a greater degree of sophistication. The roles and the divisions between jobs

have altered. The old clerk entering figures has disappeared. The ability to run accounting systems is needed in small and medium enterprises.

Mr Newman, a chartered accountant, was previously a tax expert with Cooper Brothers, (now Coopers & Lybrand), and is now with Smith and Williamson. He was nominated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales to the AAT council and, with a foot in both camps, can take an objective view.

He sees the AAT qualifications as more "student friendly" than the chartered accountancy examinations. "We do not set a classical exam. The idea that there is a constant source of knowledge that is the same now as it always was may be true of ancient Greek, but not of accounting. There has been a big change with the impact of



John Newman: sophistication

computerisation.

"Reading a balance sheet or understanding a profit-and-loss statement are still the same, but a lot of things you would have learnt in the past are now completely redundant. Tax is a great stimulant to going forward. It could be that after the next Budget everything you knew is thrown out of the window."

Mr Newman says there is a wide mix of entrants to the AAT. Some go straight from school to take up modern apprenticeships and pursue their NVQ qualifications through further education colleges. Many are graduates whose degree may not be in accounting. They want to occupy a senior position and are seeking relevant qualifications.

He argues that the AAT approach is more successful than taking graduates with relevant degrees and setting

them on the road to becoming chartered accountants.

"With graduates there is a high wastage rate. Some just can't take it. A degree is a test of how much knowledge you have gained rather than how you perform in the workplace," he says.

"We test people on their competence to do the job. Our members have experience within an accounting context and if they go on to take chartered accountant's exams they do better at passing than Oxford graduates. About a third of our members go into a chartered body."

Mr Newman believes that vocational training can only increase in importance. He says: "We must take the skills we have developed in NVQs in accounting and apply these to related areas so that we become a major influence in the financial sector."

"Liaison with employers is crucial to maintaining the relevance of our role. The presidential meetings I have held this year have been an excellent way of finding out what employers want and explaining how the AAT can help. We have been successful in gaining the support of several major employers, but there is much more that we could do."

TRAINING courses for accounting technicians are a rapidly growing industry.

"This is one of the fastest-growing areas of all accountancy courses in terms of numbers enrolling," says Dean Cassar, director of AAT (Association of Accounting Technicians) studies at Accountancy Tuition Centre, a leading finance training company. Its students include accountants who are training to qualify as certified accountants.

"We run all styles of courses nationally and internationally and a lot of them, such as AAT and NVQ courses, are not geared to formal examinations. They are industry-based. What we are seeing now in the accountancy profession is a need to train people to carry out functions in the workplace rather than just the theoretical part of accountancy. They need to be able to prepare an invoice or a cashbook. These are practical skills for people who will not get to be finance directors, but who will be good accountants, solid and well-trained."

The AAT offers four options to suit companies of different sizes. If sufficient numbers of trainees are involved, employers can form a partnership with a local college or training centre. The college provides the tuition and the workplace provides on-the-job training. The organisation's accounting systems can be used in the training.

The AAT suggests that the best option for an organisation where only one or two members of staff need training is to send them on a day-release or evening course.

An alternative is to join forces with other offices in the same company or with a group of similar organisations. Costs can be shared and the employers can maintain control of the tuition and assessment of staff. Where



The Ministry of Defence has introduced AAT training in Hampshire. From left, students Beryl Vickers, Jonathan Davies, manager Barry Müller and Lt-Col Ron Rosenhead

Students who add up to a growth industry

Rodney Hobson looks at a practical accounting course

larger numbers of staff are involved, an organisation can become an approved assessment centre, giving staff full training while at work.

Trinity House Lighthouse Service, which is responsible for the lighthouses along the coasts of England, Wales and the Channel Islands, was one of the first AAT-approved assessment centres. Gerry Callen, financial controller, says: "The need for in-house training became apparent

when several staff expressed a desire to qualify professionally as accounting technicians. We were delighted by their enthusiasm, but could not let nearly a quarter of the staff attend college on day-release." Trinity House now has 12 members of staff training on the AAT scheme.

Mr Cassar says those trainees who have the full backing of their company attend on day release. Those who take evening or week-

end courses tend to have financial backing, but are not allowed time off to study. A few finance themselves and study in their own time.

"Employers are becoming more enlightened, but not as quickly as I would have liked," he says. "Employers are still coming to us saying that they want to help their staff to train, but they do not understand what is involved or how NVQs work. There is still a long way to go."

Team spirit is par for the course

Coopers & Lybrand is delighted with the performance of its AAT recruits

Coopers and Lybrand, as one of the "big six" firms of accountants in the country, employing nearly 10,000 people, has traditionally been a major employer of chartered accountants, writes Rodney Hobson.

However, in September 1994, non-qualified recruits were taken on for the first time and were offered training opportunities to undertake the AAT training scheme.

This initiative, taken by the Midlands region, led to the recruitment of qualified accounting technicians in 1996.

Sarah Decent, the human resources manager for the Midlands region at Coopers, says: "We found the technicians performed extremely

well. The AAT qualification provides a solid accountancy foundation with the core skills we require. The accounting technicians perfectly complement our chartered accountancy staff and are a valuable support both internally and at our client sites."

Coopers has so far taken on 13 qualified technicians. The first intake joined last September and a second batch joined a month later. More recruits will be joining next month, and Coopers intends to take on seven trainees in September.

The Midlands initiative has been so successful that it is being adopted nationwide. Keith Anderson, a partner at Coopers, told a presentation for employers in Nottingham: "In today's market, every org-



Sarah Decent: enthusiastic

anisation is looking for that competitive edge. When clients ring the office, they expect whoever answers the phone to know what they are talking about. AAT-trained accounting technicians not only have the technical knowledge, but also the business skills to provide clients with the service they want."

Ms Decent adds: "Our qualified AAT members will be in charge of the more straightforward assignments and will go on personal development courses. They will also have the option of continuing to study for further accountancy qualifications."

"The accounting technician's role should grow within accountancy practice and Coopers & Lybrand will continue to recruit AAT members."

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CRICKET

Derbyshire fail to press home their advantage

By Ivo Tennant

TRENT BRIDGE (second day of four): Derbyshire, with nine second-innings wickets in hand, are 128 runs ahead of Nottinghamshire

AFTER taking eight wickets more swiftly than even their buoyant Australian captain would have anticipated, Derbyshire, inexplicably, were unable to make Nottinghamshire follow on yesterday. One of the remaining batsmen was Tim Robinson, who has a fractured hand, yet Usman Afzaal, partnered by Paul Franks and quite undeterred by anything that Devon Malcolm could come up with, added 64 runs that gave their county some succour. Nottinghamshire managed to take the wicket of Adrian Rollins before the close.

Both Afzaal and Franks played markedly more competently than anybody other than Johnson had done earlier in the innings. Their runs were needed. Although Mark Bowen, the seam bowler, who is with his second county, had taken a career-best seven for 75 earlier in the day, Derbyshire had made a sufficiently large total, 319, given that there was still something in the pitch for the medium-pace bowlers.

Not even Bowen, though, could compare with Malcolm in his initial spell. It was scarily fast and pretty accurate. Both Nottinghamshire openers, Pollard and Met-

calfe, were hit on their gloves — the former broke a finger in his left hand — and the latter twice edged close to gully before he was leg-before on the back foot. In another over, Malcolm had Pollard well taken down the leg side by Krikken and, after hitting Archer on the shoulder, had him held at first slip.

This might sound like intimidatory bowling, yet for most of this spell, Malcolm pitched the ball up and looked like the fast bowler Nelson Mandela (one of his benefit patrons) still takes him to be. He remains less accomplished at finishing off an innings, which was one reason why Nottinghamshire avoided following on. Also, Johnson, who made his third consecutive half-century, put on 50 in 12 overs with Downman in the middle of the innings.

As on the first day, there was some help for anybody who looked to pitch the ball up and move it off the seam. Dean had Downman caught at cover point, eventually accounted for Johnson and made one swing in to york Noon. When Aldred, who took 13 wickets for the second XI at Trent Bridge last week, removed Evans and Bowen, Nottinghamshire still required 42 to save the follow-on.

They had two wickets in hand, but Robinson, who would have been the very batsman for this occasion, had

fractured a bone in his right hand in the field on Wednesday and was not intending to bat. In fact, as Afzaal and Franks unexpectedly came closer to saving the follow-on, he could be spied practising one-handed defensive shots in the Nottinghamshire dressing-room. Ultimately, he did come out to bat when Afzaal, whose past ten first-class innings read 5, 47, 26, 51, 39, 67 not out, 19, 70, 77 not out and now 52, was eventually bowled.

Earlier, Nottinghamshire had done markedly well to take Derbyshire's last five wickets for 36 runs. Jones added only six to his overnight 71 before Bowen had him leg-before. Bowen then had Krikken and Aldred caught at the wicket and gained his seventh wicket when he caught Dean in his follow-through. This is the kind of pitch that he would like to play on all season.

The six catches taken by Noon equalled the record by a Nottinghamshire wicketkeeper. This has been achieved on ten occasions, four times by Bruce French, who played in the Hadlee era and now specialises — if that is the right word — as a rock climber. Wicketkeepers always were a bit different. Noon is not in that class, but his catching over the past two days has been of a sufficiently high standard to impress the most exacting of judges.



Greg Blewett surveys the damage after being bowled by Darren Gough for 28 during England's six-wicket victory over Australia at Headingley yesterday. Report, page 48

Brown and Donald force Middlesex on back foot

By Derek Hodgson

EDGBASTON (second day of four): Warwickshire won toss; Middlesex have scored 161 for seven wickets against Warwickshire

UNLESS there is a fundamental change in the weather in the next ten days, Australia will play the first Test match here on a pitch not dissimilar to the one that undermined Middlesex: even-paced, but seaming and, if under cloud, ideal for England's battery of fast-medium bowlers.

It would be unfair to say that the pitch was entirely to blame. Warwickshire's bowling, especially that

of Dougie Brown and Allan Donald, was hostile and penetrative and the slips' catching was exemplary. Yet the performance, overall, was patchy and the deputy wicketkeeper, Tony Frost, who hails from Bob Taylor's home town of Stoke, would have needed to match a display by the maestro to reduce the number of extras.

Middlesex began engagingly enough, taking 19 off Graeme Welch's first two overs, causing Brown to take over from the Pavilion End. Donald needed most of three overs to find the right length on this surface and once the pair were in harness, Middlesex were in trouble.

The pitch had a shade of green, the clouds were grey but reasonably high and the temperature low. Donald, on or about the off stump, made the ball lift sharply, while Brown found variations of seam and bounce.

Paul Weekes was taken low to the keeper's right. Mark Ramprakash, keeping down a ball that jumped, was caught at short leg. Jacques Kallis, straight and upright, was neat and fluent, before going back, fatally, to Brown. Jason Pooley was fencing and Brown lunched on figures of 13-6-22-3.

The exotically-named Mo Sheikh, 23, who was called up from the Birmingham League, was revealed

as lean and whipper. He came in off a 12-yard run-up and is probably quicker than he looks.

The Middlesex rock, in this sea of trouble, was the captain, Mike Gatting, arrived with the score at 35 for two, stayed for 24 hours either side of lunch, blocked many, plastered some and gave his opinion of the pitch with some expressive body language.

When Gatting departed, having hit six boundaries in a 100-ball innings, his team's total had taken on a measure of respectability, at least, at 130 for six.

He did, too, get a snorter from Donald after he and Keith Brown

had given the tail a platform for recovery. By mid-afternoon, the drizzle came and went and neither batting, bowling, fielding nor spectating became very pleasant. The umpires finally conceded just after 6pm with another 46 overs lost and, by then, even the hardest of spectators had gone home.

Warwickshire confirmed yesterday that their Axa Life League match against Somerset will be played as a day-night fixture at Edgbaston on Wednesday, July 23, starting at 6pm and ending approximately at 11pm. There will be a fancy dress contest, music and face-painting. You have been warned.

Lehmann's talent shines through

By Michael Henderson

TALTON (second day of four): Yorkshire have made 133 for five wickets against Somerset

IN GRIM, dank conditions, Darren Lehmann made a most assured century yesterday. Lehmann, 27, who has taken over from another Australian left-hander, Michael Bevan, as Yorkshire's overseas player, batted scrupulously to complete his first hundred for the club before bad light — and it was bad — brought play to a premature close at 5.20pm.

There were four lights on the board (three usually constitute a warning) when the umpires finally persuaded the players that they were entitled to go off. They had resorted to their light meters on at least four occasions, but to their credit, the batsmen preferred to play rather than loiter in the pavilion. So far, only 58 overs have been possible on the first two days.

No matter how poor the light, the bowlers came alike to Lehmann, who was particularly strong square of the wicket. He crunched drives between point and extra cover and ran zealously between the wickets to give some impetus to the innings, but he is not just a ball-basher. His strokes rang out truly and confidently and he showed his joy on completing his hundred by waving his bat excitedly in every direction.

The outfield was so wet that play started three hours late, with protective covers shield-

ing "baby" pitches on the far side of the square. Anthony McGrath did not detain Somerset long, caught behind as he pushed uncertainly at a ball from Kevin Shine that left him off the pitch.

By the time Craig White, missed at the wicket before he had scored, was comprehensively bowled by Andrew Caddick, Lehmann had reached his fifty. He enjoyed one moment of fortune when Mushaq Ahmed deceived him with a slower ball of full length that hit him on the front pad, but he is an uncomplicated batsman and galloped to his century from 168 balls, with 13 boundaries.

His second fifty occupied only 67 balls, which was some going on such a bothersome day. Richard Blakey conferred even more distinction on the innings by playing like an amateur at the other end. One might expect a man who spends so much time behind the stumps to pick the googly.

Blakey was clueless as Mushaq baffled him at will. How he survived the day was a comic turn on its own. There was some talk last month that Yorkshire did not actually need an overseas player — and they probably do not, for they have an abundance of talent — but, on this showing, Lehmann will make "business" runs and make them quickly, which is not something that all Yorkshire batsmen have done in the recent past. He will make them attractively, too.

Fairbrother holds key to survival

By Barney Spender

OLD TRAFFORD (second day of four): Lancashire, with eight first-innings wickets in hand, are 390 runs behind Northamptonshire

FOR THE second day running, Old Trafford escaped the rain, but it was still a gloomy day for the Lancashire supporters. Under pewter skies, they were subjected to some grey cricket as Northamptonshire took a firm grip on what has been a pretty dour game so far.

After grinding out a first-innings total of 479 in a little over ten hours, Northamptonshire picked up two early wickets, including the crucial one of Jason Gallian, to leave Lancashire in danger of suffering a second successive defeat. They are 390 behind, but, of more immediate importance, they need another 241 to avoid the follow-on. Their survival depends on Neil Fairbrother's batting, or a good dousing of rain.

Resuming on 281 for four, Northamptonshire threatened to throw away their position as Glen Chapple, in an impressive spell, picked up the wickets of David Caddick, leg-before for 15, and Kevin Curran, who spent 35 minutes gathering the nine runs that he needed for his first hundred of the season before offering a catch to Steve Titchard in the covers. Soon afterwards, Jeremy Snape played on to Gary Yates while cutting to leave Northamptonshire on 319 for seven. If Lancashire thought they

had done the hard work, however, they were quickly disabused of the idea as Tim Walton and David Ripley added 115 for the eighth wicket. Walton reached 50 three times in his five championship matches last year and kept up that consistency with a well-worked 60 yesterday.

He appears to have a tight enough defence, but he also showed a refreshing fondness for standing up straight and giving the ball a good belt. He twice deposited Gary Keedy over the mid-on boundary on his way to 20, while his third six went a bit wider, over cow-shot corner. Yet his adventure proved his downfall, as Ian Austin took a good catch on the boundary to give the left-arm spinner his third wicket and a modicum of revenge.

Emburey went quickly, but Ripley, who nudged his way effectively to 79 not out, then added to Lancashire's dark mood by adding 45 for the last wicket with Neil Taylor. The Lancashire batsmen were quickly in trouble. Nathan Wood, son of former Lancashire and England opener, Barry Wood, edged Penberthy to the boundary, but another nibble outside the off-stump produced a thinner edge and a good catch by David Ripley, diving in front of first slip. Gallian looked as comfortable as anyone in moving to 49, but, shortly before the close, he pushed forward to Emburey and was snapped up by Rob Bailey at silly point.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By Robert Sheehan, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

This Refresher illustrates an important theme in discarding.

Dealer East Love all

♠ J83		♥ A975		♦ K6		♣ 7542	
♠ A2		♥ QJ3		♦ J832		♣ 10988	
S		W		N		E	
1S		Pass		1NT		Pass	
2NT		Pass		3S		Pass	
4S		All Pass					

Contract: Four Spades by South. Lead: ten of clubs

West led the ten of clubs and the defence played three rounds of the suit, the last of which was ruffed by declarer who immediately played the king of spades from hand. West won with the ace and played his fourth club. East discarded a small diamond. Declarer ruffed the club and played two more rounds of trumps.

On the last of these West was in some difficulty. Thinking that East's diamond discard meant he was holding on to something in hearts, West threw a heart. Declarer laid down the king of hearts (in case West had started with five and East had a singleton honour), and now had a third heart trick.

There was a heated post mortem. West told East that he should have discarded a heart from his three small.

East told West that he didn't want to give away the position if declarer had had KJ10 of hearts. Although East could have been more helpful, the fault was with West. The clue was in declarer's play. If declarer had a fourth round diamond loser (holding, say, A Q x x), he would surely have ruffed a diamond in the dummy. So it was clear for West to discard a diamond.

The lesson is, if there is a shortage in dummy but declarer does not go for ruffs, it is usually because ruffs in that suit would not help him; it is safe for the defenders to discard their long cards in the suit.

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

EQUESTRIANISM

Lyon proves the main attraction in dressage

By Jenny MacArthur

POLLY LYON, who disappeared from the international equestrian scene "burnt out and exhausted" after winning her second European young riders' title in 1990, confirmed her return yesterday when she and the Irish-bred War Tyler took the overnight lead after the first day of dressage at the Chubb Insurance Windsor International Horse Trials.

Lyon, 28, produced an attractive, flowing test on the seven-year-old gelding that gave her a 1.6-point lead over Eddy Stribbe, of Holland, on Killea Castle. Their tests appeared to be in a different league from the rest of the field.

Sheffield-born Darrell Scaife, whose eventing career started eight years ago, when he wrote persuasively to Jane Holderness-Roddam, then chairman of the selectors, asking her to train him, is in third place on Faerie Dazzler.

Lyon, who is engaged to Toby Williamson, equestrian to the Queen, had one of the most spectacular starts to an eventing career. She won the individual and team gold medals at the 1987 European junior championships on Highland Road and became the European young riders' champion — and also won a team gold medal — the following year. In 1990, aged 21, she gained her second European young riders' title on Folly's Last, but instead of elation felt "exhausted and ready to quit".

Preoccupied with building up her Charlton Park equestrian yard in Wiltshire, she put her international career on hold for the next four years. It might have remained that way had not William Russell, an eventing enthusiast, whose son, Miles, had competed with Lyon, offered to buy her a "potential top-class event horse" — provided that she found it.

Wat Tyler was discovered two years ago on Anglesey. Bold and athletic, he has been placed each time at one-day trials this season and has helped to make the sport fun again for Lyon. Windsor is his first three-day event, but Lyon is optimistic about the 26-fence cross-country course tomorrow. "It's big, but it's well built and inviting and should suit him," she said.

Results, page 42

IN BRIEF

British men fall at qualifying stage

THREE more British players were beaten in the first qualifying round of the French Open tennis championships in Paris yesterday. Danny Sapsford, Luke Milligan and Nick Weal followed Andrew Richardson and Chris Wilkinson out of the tournament.

Sapsford was beaten 6-3, 6-3 by Rodolphe Gilbert, of France. Milligan lost 6-3, 4-6, 0-1 to Rodolphe Cadart, also of France, and Weal was beaten 6-1, 6-4 by Vincenzo Santopadre, of Italy.

Michael Stich joined the list of absentees from the men's singles when he announced yesterday that he would not be taking part. Stich plans to retire in September.

Timely arrival

Basketball: John Arnechi, the England forward, will, after all, be able to play for his country in Pezinek, Slovakia, tonight when they begin their programme in the qualification round of the European championship against Luxembourg. It was thought that Arnechi would not arrive in time as he has been in the United States attempting to revive his career in the National Basketball Association.

Three and easy

Golf: Tommy Horton completed two hat-tricks when he won the Scottish Life/Ben Sayers senior club professional championship by nine strokes at Finham Park, Coventry, yesterday. Horton had a seven-under-par final round of 60 to win the event for the third time in succession. It was his third seniors' title in as many weeks.

Ireland beaten

Rugby union: Northland trounced the Ireland Development XV 69-16 in the first match of their New Zealand tour at Whangarei yesterday. The second division team scored ten tries, while the Irish side could manage only one from Gary Halpin, the captain.

Home rule

Cycling: Roberto Sgambelluri, of Italy, sprinted the closing 100 metres yesterday to win the sixth stage of the Giro d'Italia. Pavel Tonkov retained the overall lead.

CRICKET	
Brighthelm Assurance County Championship (first day of four): Bedfordshire v Sussex. 11.15. Bedfordshire 104, Sussex minimum.	
CHESTER-LE-STREET: Durham v Worcestershire	
CARDIFF: Glamorgan v Hampshire	
GLoucester: Gloucestershire v Essex	
OLD TRAFFORD: Lancashire v Surrey	
LEICESTER: Leicestershire v Warwickshire	
TRENT BRIDGE: Nottinghamshire v Derbyshire	
TALTON: Somerset v Yorkshire	
HORSHAM: Sussex v Kent	

EDGBASTON: Warwickshire v Middlesex	
SECOND XI CHAMPIONSHIP (first day of four): Bedfordshire v Sussex. 11.15. Bedfordshire 104, Sussex minimum.	
CHESTER-LE-STREET: Durham v Worcestershire	
CARDIFF: Glamorgan v Hampshire	
GLoucester: Gloucestershire v Essex	
OLD TRAFFORD: Lancashire v Surrey	
LEICESTER: Leicestershire v Warwickshire	
TRENT BRIDGE: Nottinghamshire v Derbyshire	
TALTON: Somerset v Yorkshire	
HORSHAM: Sussex v Kent	

RUGBY LEAGUE	
Liverpool v Hull	
St Helens v Wigan	
Bradford v Oldham	
London v Warrington	
Sheffield v Halifax	
Wigan v Castleford	
First division	
Featherstone v Whitehaven	
Huddersfield v Swinton	
Hull v Keighley (B)	
Widley v Hull K R	
Workington v Widnes	
Second division	
Coleville v Doncaster	

HURLEY v BARROW	
Prescott v Barrow	
Rochdale v York	

OTHER SPORT	
BADMINTON: World team championships (at Glasgow)	
EQUESTRIANISM: Windsor Horse Trials	
GOLF: Volvo PGA Championship (at Wentworth)	
SPEEDWAY: Elite League: Belle Vue v Wolverhampton (7.30). Peterborough v Ipswich (7.30). Premier League: Edinburgh v Stoke (7.30). Premier League Cup: Avon v Essex v Oxford (8.0)	
TENNIS: WTA world doubles Cup (at Edinburgh)	

HOCKEY	
WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL MATCH: England v Scotland (at Neth. Millers, Kenilworth, 7.0)	

WORD-WATCHING	
By Philip Howard	
DAVACH	
a. A Breton cow	
b. The fluke of an anchor	
c. A measure of land	
ESPADON	
a. A sword	
b. A bicuspidate beard	
c. The ace of spades	
DANTE	
a. A sort of buffalo	
b. A trailing hat	
c. An exile	
ENROUGH	
a. Enough	
b. To make rough	
c. An Irish lochan	
Answers on page 46	

WINNING MOVE	
By Raymond Keene	
Black to play. This position is from the game Thomas — Horne, Hastings 1948. It seems as if Black must be forced to exchange queens, as his own queen is pinned and attacked by the white knight. However, he had other plans. How did he continue?	
Solution on page 46	

Stoute keen to show off Dazzle

I had to watch television with nothing on

An acquaintance of mine is fond of working the conversation around to television in order to boast that he never watches it. The reason, he never watches television is that there is "never anything on". We have a ritualistic argument concerning how he knows there is nothing on if he never watches television, and the mysterious fact that there always seems to be something on my television, even if it is nothing on his.

So I hope he will not be reading this piece, because last night there was nothing on television. This is an unpromising admission. The words into a column that is supposed to stretch to 950, but I trust you will be sustained by the tension of wondering if I will make it without recourse to what journalists call "judicious use of white space".

My acquaintance often qualifies his statement about there being

nothing on television by saying: "When I say there is nothing on television, I mean..." Similarly, when I say there was nothing on television last night, I mean there was nothing much beyond par-runs, series, much-written-about factual programmes and *This Life*.

Alas *This Life* (BBC2). Now there is a lifebelt for a drowning writer if ever I spotted one on a dull night. *This Life* is the only soap I have ever watched without missing an episode, or was before the BBC launched the latest series at the maddeningly inconvenient time of 9.30pm. The switch means that I have now missed a couple of episodes, so I have no idea why Egg is working in some sort of charity cafe.

For those who may still be unfamiliar with the show, *This Life* is about five twenty-something lawyers sharing a house, except that one of them, Warren, has gone

off on a world tour and another, the aforesaid Egg, gave up lawyering and became a bit of a layabout.

The other three are Milly, who is a solicitor and Egg's partner, and Anna and Miles, both barristers in the same chambers and on occasion both barristers in the same bed: perhaps one day they will get it all together at work and play and name their house "Bedchambers". Meanwhile, the sexual tension between Anna and Miles is one of the programme's sustaining themes, temporarily eclipsed last night by Milly's Big Decision.

Would she or would she not agree to go to Paris with her boss, Mr O'Donnell? A business trip, he said, but he, nobody was believing that. Milly turned him down in the end, but then rushed back to the office to tell O'Donnell she had changed her mind, only to find

REVIEW

Peter Barnard



O'Donnell (smooth, or what?) had offered the trip to another woman on the staff.

The thing about *This Life* is that you can believe it. I do not pretend to know many people in their twenties, nor would I presume to suggest that these are typical. A critic or two has suggested that this lot, with their recreational sex and their recreational drugs, are pretty poor examples. But this is a

television show, not a Billy Graham rally.

And, in any event, what actually happens in *This Life* is only half the point. These are young people feeling their way forward, trying things here and there, taking in this, rejecting that. How else to grow? They could all end up in the next-but-one Blair Cabinet, vying for the leadership as Tony softens off to the (reformed) Lords.

But 581 words on *This Life* does not a column make, so I turn to Channel 4 for help. *Health Alert* would be a respectable programme for review even if there was something on the telly, so on a night like last night *Health Alert* became a positive beacon of light, even if some of the close-ups of the pretty light show were not a pretty sight.

Acne is a condition generally associated with teenagers and often treated with a mixture of ribaldry and outright cruelty by

those who do not suffer from it. But acne can strike at any time, is not caused by going unwashed too much washing makes it worse and science has yet to find a surefire cure.

Health Alert was subtitled *My Friends Call Me Pimple Face* — and that is exactly what some of the youngsters in the programme were called by their peers, Michael Hall, now 27 and a sufferer for many years, refused to leave his bedroom at one stage: he felt "branded" by the condition.

Michelle Allen became suicidal and her mother recalled how, each day when she returned to the house, she rushed upstairs to make sure that Michelle was still alive. Such are the consequences of living in a society too impressed by outward appearances. Dr Tony Chu, founder of the Acne Support Group, said that "laser resurfac-

ing", which can remove the scars which acne leaves behind, has to be paid for by the patient because it is seen as cosmetic surgery. He is right to imply that the removal of scarring is far different from changing a nose one doesn't happen to like.

BBC2 has been running a 15-minute series entitled *A Woman Called Smith*, whose subjects have nothing in common beyond their surname. Last night it was about Alison Smith, who formed an ambition to become a midwife when the one who attended her admitted she had not had children and therefore had no idea what giving birth was like.

But Alison is torn between careers. She has begun selling erotic lingerie and various associated "toys" which run on batteries. She holds parties for groups of women who have a great time playing... oh dear, I seem to have run out of space. What a relief.

- BBC1**
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (54014)
 - 7.00 BBC Breakfast News (59472)
 - 9.00 BBC2 News Extra (1) (3704168)
 - 9.20 Style Challenge (6248355)
 - 9.45 Kibitz (7593033)
 - 10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (26502)
 - 11.00 News (1) Regional News and weather (7344879)
 - 11.05 The Great Escape (7761878)
 - 11.35 Real Rooms: A Coventry dining room is transformed (8642192)
 - 12.00 News (1) and weather (8971149)
 - 12.05pm Call My Bluff (8619255)
 - 12.35 The Practice Last in series (9050255)
 - 1.00 News (1) and weather (89833)
 - 1.30 Regional News and weather (86394168)
 - 1.40 The Weather Show (95583255)
 - 1.45 Neighbours (40483897)
 - 2.10 Quiz (8222555)
 - 2.55 Through the Keyhole: Loyd Grossman snorts around two celebrity homes (6801052)
 - 3.20 Connoisseurs' Collections: A set of James Bond books reveal a surprising amount about antiques expert Paul Viney (8252323)
 - 3.30 Playdays (8844323) 3.50 Plasmio (5101410) 3.55 Bodger and Badger (8384587) 4.10 Ace Ventura: Pet Detective (4725507) 4.35: Clarissa Explains It All (9553253) 5.00 Newsround (1) (414255) 5.10 Blue Peter (1) (8633781)
 - 5.35 Neighbours (1) (100526)
 - 6.00 News (1) and weather (965)
 - 6.30 Regional News (217)
 - 7.00 Weekend Watchdog: Anne Robinson and the team check out badly organised golf tournaments (1) (4323)
 - 7.30 Top of the Pops: The latest hits, pre-chart sounds and live performances (1) (101)
 - 8.00 X-Care: One car is stolen every minute in Britain. Manchester police have set up a crack undercover unit to tackle the problem of car theft (1) (8483)
 - 8.30 A Question of Sport: David Coleman asks the questions in the light-hearted quiz as regulars Ally McCoist and John Parrott lead the teams vying for victory (1) (9878)
 - 9.00 News (1) and weather (1830)
 - 9.30 Independent Proposal (1993): Penniless architect's wife Demi Moore has her life turned upside down by billionaire Robert Redford, who offers her \$1 million to spend a night with him. Directed by Adrian Lyne (598472)
 - 11.25 A Woman Scorned: Meredith Baxter stars as a woman who suspects her husband is having an affair. Directed by Dick Lowry (451658) 11.55 The Gent: George (225323) 11.55 FILM: A Woman Scorned (424762) 1.25am FILM: They're a Weird Mob (675521) 3.10 News headlines and weather (78180569)
 - 12.55am They're a Weird Mob (1968) with Walter Chalmers and Clare Dunne. Australian comedy centring on the trials and tribulations faced by a young Italian struggling to fit into Sydney's society of life. Directed by Michael Powell (854415)
 - 2.40 Weather (1849540)

VideoPlus+ and the Video Plus Codes

The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCode™ numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder with a VideoPlus+™ handset. Tap in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+™, PlusCode™ and Video Programmer are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.

- BBC2**
- 6.00am Open University: Global Firms, Shrinking Worlds (8683232) 6.25 The Question of Sovereignty (718544)
 - 7.15 News (1) (3425533) 7.30 Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles (1) (8647385) 7.55 50/50 (1) (7173743) 8.20 Adventures of the Garden Fairies (3748014) 8.25 Tales of the Tooth Fairies (1) (8950694)
 - 8.35 The Record (3838217) 9.00 The French Experience (3771330) 9.15 The French Collection (589174) 9.45 Watch (7175675) 10.00 Teletubbies (40052)
 - 10.30 Watch Out (3583323) 10.45 Pathways of Belief (8353878) 11.00 Look and Read Special (8201033) 11.20 Job Bank (5833120) 11.40 The Geography Programme (4887491)
 - 12.00 English Film: Poetry Blackout: The poetry of William Blake (1) (90856)
 - 12.30pm Working Lunch (50526) 1.00 Job Bank (45524978) 1.10 Job Bank (8531123) 1.20 The Developing World (70116052) 1.45 Words and Pictures (8637121) 2.00 Adventures of the Garden Fairies (30559120) 2.05 Tales of the Tooth Fairies (1) (8950694)
 - 2.10 International Golf: Women's Tennis. Action from the PGA championship at Wentworth and the women's world doubles cup from Craigiebuckhart, Edinburgh (4218897)
 - 6.45 The Simpsons (1) (262255)
 - 7.10 Great Railway Journeys: Chris Bonington is in Canada to travel on the spectacular Halifax to Porteau Cove line (1) (959675)
 - 8.00 Festivals: RSPB officer looks at Williams (1) (8385)
 - 8.30 Gardeners' World: Gary Search designs the latest in garden design at the Chelsea Flower Show (1) (8320)
 - 9.00 The Fast Show: Comedy sketch show with the award-winning team, starring Charlie Higson and Paul Whitehouse (1) (9472)
 - 9.30 Sunnyvale Farm: Ray, Wendy and Justin join forces in an attempt to stop smitten Ken's marriage of convenience to Conchita. Last in series (1) (30782)
 - 10.00 Have I Got News for You: Eve Pollard and Sue Perkins are the guests (1) (81359)
 - 10.30 Newsnight (1) (447878)
 - 11.15 Space: Above and Beyond (482101)
 - 12.00 This Life: Miles and Egg get a visit from the police (1) (1) (4457433)
 - 12.45am The Preservationist (1992): A high school student has violent and erotic hallucinations and is obsessed with her teacher. When her sinister visions become reality, a light-hearted celebration turns into a black mass in Swedish with English subtitles (311298)
 - 2.35-2.40 Weather (1622873)

SKY MOVIES GOLD

6.00pm Sunset Boulevard (1950) (267355) 8.00 Running Scared (1986) (2678101) 10.00 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 12.00 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 1.00 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 1.30 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 2.00 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 2.30 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 3.00 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 3.30 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 4.00 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 4.30 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 5.00 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 5.30 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 6.00 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 6.30 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 7.00 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 7.30 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 8.00 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 8.30 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 9.00 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 9.30 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 10.00 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 10.30 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 11.00 The Untouchables (1959) (2678101) 11.30 The 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